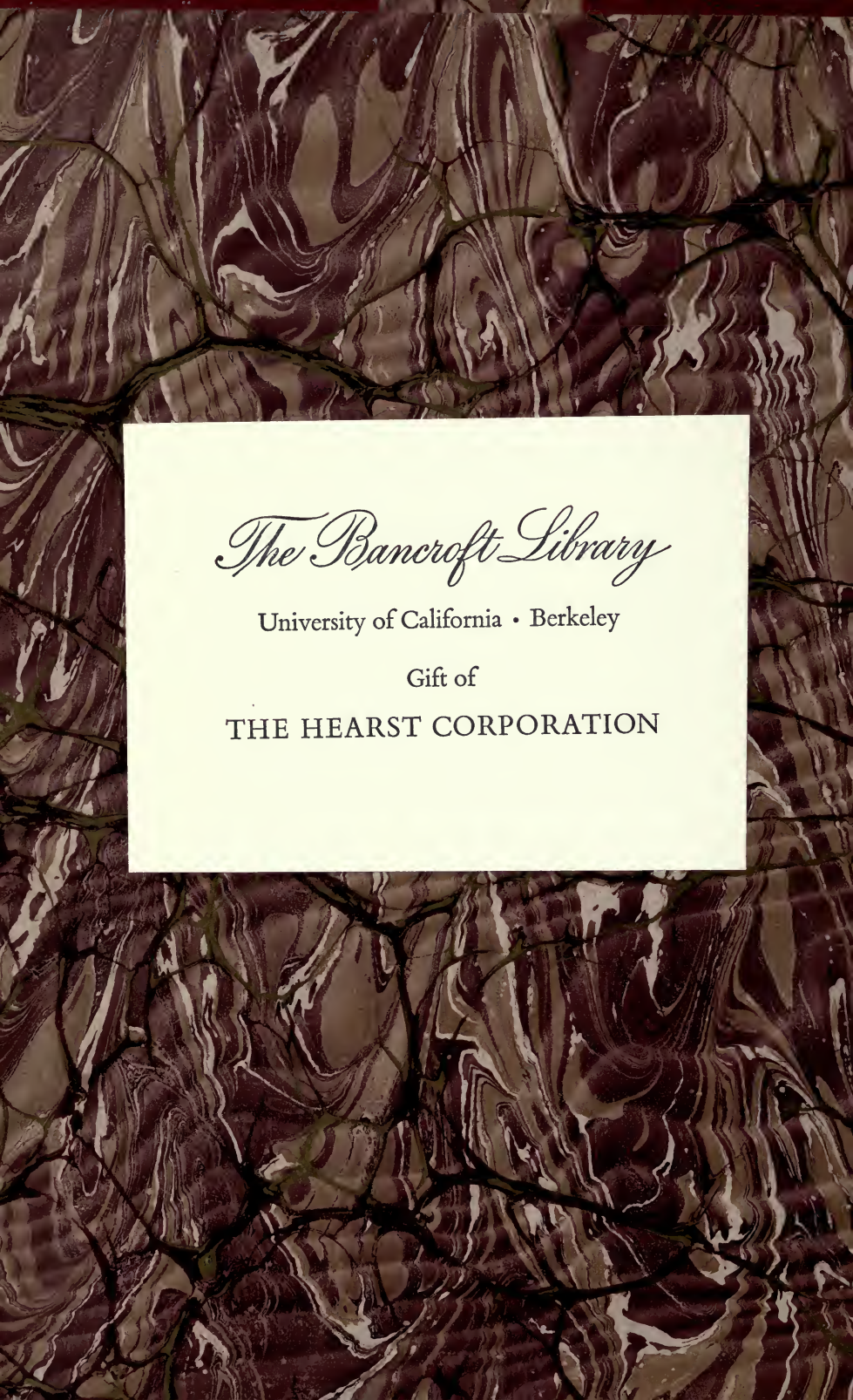



The Bancroft Library

University of California • Berkeley

Gift of

THE HEARST CORPORATION



Hearst Memorial Library
Case No. _____ Shelf No. 4-53
Drawer No. ____ Inventory No. 71584
"NOT TO BE REMOVED FROM LIBRARY
WITHOUT PROPER AUTHORITY."
PROPERTY OF HEARST CORP.



Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2007 with funding from
Microsoft Corporation

http://www.archive.org/details/lettersofjamesru21lowerich

LETTERS OF
JAMES RUSSELL LOWELL



LETTERS

OF

JAMES RUSSELL LOWELL

EDITED BY

CHARLES ELIOT NORTON

VOL. II, PART I

(Bound for Horatio N. Fraser)



NEW YORK
HARPER & BROTHERS, PUBLISHERS
1894

LETTERS OF

JAMES RUSSELL LOWELL

EDITED BY

CHARLES ELIOT NORTON

VOLUME II.



NEW YORK
HARPER & BROTHERS PUBLISHERS
1894

Copyright, 1893, by HARPER & BROTHERS.

All rights reserved.

CONTENTS OF VOL. II

VI

1868–1872

LIFE AT ELMWOOD. — "UNDER THE WILLOWS AND OTHER POEMS."—"MY STUDY WINDOWS."—"AMONG MY BOOKS," FIRST SERIES.—"THE CATHEDRAL."—VISIT FROM THOMAS HUGHES.

LETTERS TO C. E. NORTON, R. W. EMERSON, E. L. GODKIN, LESLIE STEPHEN, J. B. THAYER, W. D. HOWELLS, J. T. FIELDS, MISS NORTON, MISS CABOT, T. B. ALDRICH, THOMAS HUGHES, R. S. CHILTON, F. H. UNDERWOOD page 1

VII

1872–1876

VISIT TO EUROPE: ENGLAND, RESIDENCE IN PARIS, ITALY, PARIS, ENGLAND.—HONORARY DEGREE FROM OXFORD.—ELEGY ON AGASSIZ.—RETURN TO ELMWOOD.—RESUMPTION OF PROFESSORIAL DUTIES.—CENTENNIAL POEMS AT CONCORD AND CAMBRIDGE. — "AMONG MY BOOKS," SECOND SERIES. — ENTRANCE INTO POLITICAL LIFE. — DELEGATE TO THE NATIONAL REPUBLICAN CONVENTION. — PRESIDENTIAL ELECTOR.

LETTERS TO MISS GRACE NORTON, GEORGE PUTNAM, MISS NORTON, THOMAS HUGHES, C. E. NORTON, LESLIE STEPHEN, E. L. GODKIN, T. B. ALDRICH, MRS. L. A. STIMSON, W. D. HOWELLS, T. S. PERRY, MRS. ——, J. W. FIELD, R. S. CHILTON, R. W. GILDER, JOEL BENTON, E. P. BLISS, H. W. LONGFELLOW . 81

VIII

1877–1880

VISIT TO BALTIMORE.—APPOINTED MINISTER TO SPAIN.—LIFE IN MADRID.—JOURNEY IN SOUTHERN FRANCE.—VISIT TO ATHENS AND CONSTANTINOPLE.—ILLNESS OF MRS. LOWELL. —TRANSFERRED TO LONDON.

LETTERS TO MRS. ——, J. B. THAYER, C. E. NORTON, F. J. CHILD, MISS NORTON, MRS. EDWARD BURNETT, MISS GRACE NORTON, THOMAS HUGHES, H. W. LONGFELLOW, GEORGE PUTNAM, J. W. FIELD, MRS. W. E. DARWIN, LESLIE STEPHEN, R. W. GILDER page 186

IX

1880–1885

IN LONDON. — VACATION TOUR TO GERMANY AND ITALY. — DEATH OF MRS. LOWELL.—DEPARTURE FROM ENGLAND.

LETTERS TO C. E. NORTON, H. W. LONGFELLOW, MRS. W. E. DARWIN, R. W. GILDER, J. W. FIELD, T. B. ALDRICH, W. D. HOWELLS, F. J. CHILD, J. B. THAYER, GEORGE PUTNAM, MRS. W. K. CLIFFORD, O. W. HOLMES, MISS GRACE NORTON 250

X

1885–1889

RETURN TO AMERICA. — LIFE IN SOUTHBOROUGH AND BOSTON.—SUMMER VISITS TO ENGLAND.

LETTERS TO W. D. HOWELLS, C. E. NORTON, R. W. GILDER, J. W. FIELDS, R. S. CHILTON, MISS GRACE NORTON, THE MISSES LAWRENCE, MRS. LESLIE STEPHEN, MRS. EDWARD BURNETT, G. H. PALMER, T. B. ALDRICH, THOMAS HUGHES, MISS E. G. NORTON, LESLIE STEPHEN, MISS SEDGWICK, F. H. UNDERWOOD, MRS. J. T. FIELDS, MR. AND MRS. S. WEIR MITCHELL, MRS. W. K. CLIFFORD, MRS. W. E. DARWIN . 297

XI

1889–1891

RETURN TO ELMWOOD. — DECLINING HEALTH. — VISIT FROM LESLIE STEPHEN.—THE END.

LETTERS TO MRS. LESLIE STEPHEN, R. W. GILDER, JOSIAH QUINCY, THE MISSES LAWRENCE, W. D. HOWELLS, THOMAS HUGHES, S. WEIR MITCHELL, MRS. W. K. CLIFFORD, LESLIE STEPHEN, E. L. GODKIN, MISS KATE FIELD, C. E. NORTON, MISS E. G. NORTON, EDWARD E. HALE, MRS. F. G. SHAW, E. R. HOAR, MRS. EDWARD BURNETT page 389

INDEX 441

LETTERS OF

JAMES RUSSELL LOWELL

VI

1868–1872

LIFE AT ELMWOOD. — "UNDER THE WILLOWS AND OTHER POEMS."—"MY STUDY WINDOWS."—"AMONG MY BOOKS," FIRST SERIES.—"THE CATHEDRAL."—VISIT FROM THOMAS HUGHES.

LETTERS TO C. E. NORTON, R. W. EMERSON, E. L. GODKIN, LESLIE STEPHEN, J. B. THAYER, W. D. HOWELLS, J. T. FIELDS, MISS NORTON, MISS CABOT, T. B. ALDRICH, THOMAS HUGHES, R. S. CHILTON, F. H. UNDERWOOD.

TO C. E. NORTON

Elmwood, Oct. 7, 1868.

. . . "The summer is past, the harvest is ended," and I have not yet written to you! Well, I was resolved I would not write till the printers had in their hands all the copy of my new volume of old poems. And that has taken longer than I expected. I have been Marthaized by many small troubles. But last night I fairly ended my work. . . . I had decided to put the "June Idyl" in the forefront and call it "A June Idyl, and Other Poems." But Fields told me that Whittier's new volume was to be called "A Summer Idyl"—so I was

blocked there. Then I took "Appledore," merely because it was a pretty name, though I did not wish to put that in the van. So it was all settled for the second time. Then I was suddenly moved to finish my "Voyage to Vinland," part of which, you remember, was written eighteen years ago. I meant to have made it much longer, but maybe it is better as it is. I clapt a beginning upon it, patched it in the middle, and then got to what had always been my favorite part of the plan. This was to be a prophecy by Gudrida, a woman who went with them, of the future America. I have written in an unrhymed alliterated measure, in very short verse and stanzas of five lines each. It does not aim at following the law of the Icelandic alliterated stave, but hints at it and also at the *asonante*, without being properly either. But it runs well and is melodious, and we think it pretty good here, as does also Howells. Well, after that, of course, I was all for alliteration, and, as I liked the poem, thought no title so good as "The Voyage to Vinland, and Other Poems." But Fields would not hear of it, and proposed that I should rechristen the Idyl "Elmwood," and name the book after that. But the more I thought of it the less I liked it. It was throwing my sanctuary open to the public and making a show-house of my hermitage. It was indecent. So I fumed and worried. I was *riled.* Then it occurred to me that I had taken the name of "June Idyl" as a *pis-aller*, because in my haste I could think of nothing else. Why not name it over? So I hit upon "Under the Willows," and that it is to be. . . . But it is awfully depressing work. They call back so

many moods, and they are so bad. I think, though, there is a suggestion of something good in them at least, and they are not silly. But how much the public will stand! I sometimes wonder they don't drive all us authors into a corner and make a *battue* of the whole concern at once. . . .

TO R. W. EMERSON

Elmwood, Oct. 14, 1868.

My dear Sir,—If you had known what a poem your two tickets contained for me, how much they recalled, how many vanished faces of thirty years ago, how much gratitude for all you have been and are to us younger men (a debt I always love to acknowledge, though I can never repay it), you would not have dreamed of my not being an eager hearer during the whole course. Even were I not sure (as I always am with you) of having what is best in me heightened and strengthened, I should go out of loyalty to what has been one of the great privileges of my life. I, for one,

"Obey the voice at eve obeyed at prime,"

and you may be sure of one pair of ears in which the voice is always musical and magisterial too. . . .

I am gratefully and affectionately

Your liegeman,

J. R. Lowell.

TO E. L. GODKIN

Elmwood, Nov. 20, 1868.

. . . The cause you advocate in the *Nation* is not specially American—it is that of honest men every-

where, and acknowledges no limits of nationality. And let me say for your comfort, that while I have heard the *criticism* of the *Nation* objected to as ill-natured (though I naturally don't think it so), I have never heard its political writing spoken of but with praise. The other day at a dinner-table some of its criticisms were assailed, and I said that I might be suspected of partiality if I defended them (though I *think* I am not [open to the charge]), but that "I deliberately thought that its discussions of politics had done more good and influenced opinion more than any other agency, or all others combined, in the country." This, so far as I could judge, was unanimously assented to. At any rate, one of my antagonists agreed with me entirely, and no one else dissented. The criticisms in the *Nation* often strike me as admirable. I sometimes dissent, but I am getting old and good-natured, and know, moreover, how hard it is to write well, to come even anywhere near one's own standard of good writing. . . .

. . . For my own part I am not only thankful for the *Nation*, but continually wonder how you are able to make so excellent a paper with your material. I have been an editor and know how hard it is. . . .

I had forgotten the financial question. I insist on my own view of it. I shall write from time to time till I think we are square. What Fields pays me, I doubt if anybody else would. He has always been truly generous in his dealings with me. If you feel any scruples, you can make matters even by sending the *Nation* for a year to John B. Minor, Professor in the University of Virginia, Charlottesville. Accident has lately put me

in correspondence with him and given me a strong feeling of respect for his character. He lost everything by the war, but was and is a Union man, though he went with his State. I have often wished the *Nation* might have some circulation at the South, and here is a good chance to get at *one* sensible man there at any rate. I don't wish him to know where it comes from. Perhaps it would be better to send him a number now and then at first, till he got used to it, omitting numbers that might startle his natural prejudices in any way. I think it would do good. I confess to a strong sympathy with men who sacrificed everything even to a bad cause which they could see only the good side of; and, now the war is over, I see no way to heal the old wounds but by frankly admitting this and acting upon it. We can never reconstruct the South except through its own leading men, nor ever hope to have them on our side till we make it for their interest and compatible with their honor to be so. At this moment in Virginia, the oath required by the new Constitution makes it impossible to get a decent magistrate. . . .

TO LESLIE STEPHEN

Elmwood, Thanksgiving Day, 1868.

My dear Stephen,—I hope that while I am writing this, with my pipe in my mouth, you and Mrs. Stephen are not suffering those agonies that come from being rocked in the cradle of the deep. You are wallowing along through this dreary rain towards drearier Halifax, and I wish instead you were going to eat turkey with us. I am truly glad to hear that Mrs. Stephen is so

much better, and that she could find something to like among us. I don't wonder that she thought America dull, if she judged it by Elmwood. It *was* dull, but I couldn't help it, for I am as stupid as a public dinner. A host should have nothing on his mind.

Had I known where, I should have sent you my book. You will get it before long in London, and may like it as little as you please, if you will keep on liking *me*.

M—— was delighted with her gift from England, and has written to say so. She was especially pleased to get a package from London addressed to herself and not to my care. I immediately seized the last volume (which I had not read) and went through it before I "retired," as Mrs. Stowe would say. I was amazingly taken with it, and am not ashamed to confess that I blubbered over "Beauty and the Beast," and gulped my heart down several times in "Little Red Riding-hood." I am no great judge, but the book struck me as simply delightful, which, after all, is something of a literary merit. As for Mabel, her conceit is intolerable. The books stand on her shelves, and when her young friends come to see her she turns the conversation adroitly upon Miss Thackeray, and then exhibits her prize. I gave her *my* book, and she has not read it yet. At so low an ebb is taste in a democracy! I begin to suspect an immoral tendency in "The Story of Elizabeth."

I was very much amused with your picture of those wretched British swells in Washington. If it is dull during the recess, what must it be when Congress gathers into one focus the united rays of boredom from every



Capt. Semmes.

corner of the country? I am thankful that we can revenge ourselves on part of the British race for the wrongs of the *Alabama*. You gave us the heroic Semmes, and we let loose Sumner upon your embassy. I was not sorry you should say a kind word for poor old Johnson. I have never thought so ill of him as becomes an orthodox Republican. The worst of him was that he meant well. As for Chase, he is a weak man with an imposing presence — a most unhappy combination, of which the world has not wanted examples from Saul and Pompey down. Such men as infallibly make mischief as they defraud expectation. If you write about American politics, remember that Grant has always chosen able lieutenants. My own opinion is (I give it for what it is worth), that the extreme Republicans will be wofully disappointed in Grant. At any rate, if he should throw away his opportunity to be an independent President, he is not the man I take him to be. No man ever had a better chance to be a great magistrate than he. If he shouldn't prove to be one—well, a democracy can bear a great deal. . . .

It is raining drearily to-day, but my sister and a nephew and niece and Rowse are to keep festival with me, and I shall be quite patriarchal. It is by such fetches that I supply the want of grandchildren. However, I have grandnephews, and so am a kind of grandfather by brevet.

1870, my dear boy, is a far cry, but I shall look forward to it as the bringer of good gifts, if it bring you back to me. You know the way to my door and my heart, and won't stupidly go to the Tremont House again. Perhaps I shall keep a coach by that time, who

knows? Give our kindest regards to Mrs. Stephen, and be sure that, whatever happens, it will never come to pass that I am not heartily and affectionately

Yours,

J. R. Lowell.

TO JAMES B. THAYER

Elmwood, Dec. 8, 1868.

My dear Sir,—I have never meddled with any criticism of what I write, nor am I very sensitive about it, having long ago made up my mind that whatever was good would make its own way at last. But how could I be other than pleased with your "notice" of my book in the *Daily Advertiser?* It was sympathetic, and what more could one ask? A criticism *meant* to be friendly would be resented by a man of self-respect as an alms. I enclose you one of a kind I am used to,* and leave you to guess whether I ought not to be thankful for such as yours. I was pleased that you should remember some old verses of mine, which I also think better of than I commonly do of what I have written—that about the bobolink, for example.

Perhaps you thought I shouldn't like what you said about Mr. Emerson? Not a bit of it! I am and always

* This was the notice enclosed:—"Under the Willows, and Other Poems." By James Russell Lowell, pp. viii., 286. Boston: Fields, Osgood & Co.

"An introductory note to this work informs us that no collection of Mr. Lowell's poems has been made since 1848. All but two of the shortest which appear here have been printed before, either in whole or part, the greater number having been published more than fifteen years ago. The author's taste and scholarship will find attentive readers for all he writes, whether prose or poetry."

shall be grateful for what I owe him, and glad to acknowledge it on all occasions. As for originality, I have read too much not to know that it is never absolute, and that it will always take care of itself. When a man begins to be touchy about it, he has already lost what little he ever had. One might as well take out a patent for the cut of his jib, when those who remember the family know perfectly well that his grandfather invented it for him.

I don't agree with you about "weariless." In language one should be nice but not difficult. In poetry, especially, something must be "pardoned to the spirit of liberty." I thought of the objection when I was correcting my proofs, and let the word pass deliberately. Shakespeare has "viewless" and "woundless"; "tireless" is not without authority ('spite of the *double-entendre*); and I remember "soundless sea" somewhere or other. I think the form is utterly indefensible, but good nevertheless.

I don't know how to answer your queries about my "Ode." I *guess* I am right, for it was matter of pure instinct—except the strophe you quote, which I added for balance both of measure and thought. I am not sure if I understand what you say about the tenth strophe. You will observe that it leads naturally to the eleventh, and that I there justify a certain narrowness in it as an expression of the popular feeling as well as my own. I confess I have never got over the feeling of wrath with which (just after the death of my nephew Willie) I read in an English paper that nothing was to be hoped of an army officered by tailors' apprentices

and butcher-boys. The poem was written with a vehement speed, which I thought I had lost in the skirts of my professor's gown. Till within two days of the celebration I was hopelessly dumb, and then it all came with a rush, literally making me lean (*mi fece magro*), and so nervous that I was weeks in getting over it. I was longer in getting the new (eleventh) strophe to my mind than in writing the rest of the poem. In *that* I hardly changed a word, and it was so undeliberate that I did not find out till after it was printed that some of the verses lacked corresponding rhymes. All the "War Poems" were improvisations, as it were. My blood was up, and you would hardly believe me if I were to tell how few hours intervened between conception and completion, even in so long a one as "Mason and Slidell." So I have a kind of faith that the "Ode" is right because it was *there*, I hardly knew how. I doubt you are right in wishing it more historical. But then I could not have written it. I had put the ethical and political view so often in prose that I was weary of it. The motives of the war? I had impatiently argued them again and again—but for an ode they must be in the blood and not the memory. One of my great defects (I have always been conscious of it) is an impatience of mind which makes me contemptuously indifferent about arguing matters that have once become convictions.

It bothers me sometimes in writing verses. The germ of a poem (the *idée-mère*) is always delightful to me, but I have no pleasure in working it up. I carry them in my head sometimes for years before they insist on being written. You will find some verses of mine in the

next *Atlantic*,* the conception of which tickles me—but half spoiled (and in verse half is more than whole) in the writing. But what can a poor devil do who must gather a stick here and another there to keep the domestic pot a-boiling? My eggs take long in hatching, because I need to brood a good while—and if one is called away from the nest long enough to let it grow cold?

And the "Nooning." Sure enough, where is it? The "June Idyl" (written in '51 or '52) is a part of what I had written as the induction to it. The description of spring in one of the "Biglow Papers" is another fragment of the same, tagged with rhyme for the nonce. So is a passage in "Mason and Slidell," beginning "Oh, strange new world." The "Voyage to Vinland," the "Pictures from Appledore," and "Fitz-Adam's Story" were written for the "Nooning," as originally planned. So, you see, I had made some progress. Perhaps it will come by and by—not in the shape I meant at first, for something broke my life in two, and I cannot piece it together again. Besides, the Muse asks *all* of a man, and for many years I have been unable to give myself up as I would. You will have noticed that many of the poems in my book are moody—perhaps unhealthy (I hope you may never have reason to like "After the Burial" better than you do), and I was mainly induced to print them that I might get rid of them by shutting them between two covers. Perhaps I am not very clear, but I know what I mean.

I meant to have written you a note, but, enticed by

* "The Flying Dutchman."

your friendly warmth, I have expatiated into a letter. Forgive me, and set it down to your own friendly warmth. It will be a warning to you in future. Meanwhile, it is some consolation that I am cheating dear Gurney, for I ought to be doing the politics of the next *North American Review*.

I remain very cordially yours,

J. R. Lowell.

P. S. Since this was written (for it was written last Sunday, and I have rewritten it to get rid of some too *expansive* passages) Motley has given me the beginning of one of my poems, which I had lost. I thought you might like to have it, so I copy it on the next leaf that you may paste it in before the poem called "A Mood," where it belongs. Hamilton Wild wrote it down for Motley from memory, and as it has stuck in his head so many years I think it must have some good in it. I rather like it myself. I found the poem as it stands in an old note-book. I knew that it had been printed (part of it), and that it did not begin rightly—but could not remember where to look for it.

I go to the ridge in the forest
 Which I haunted in days gone by;
But thou, O Memory, pourest
 No magical drop in mine eye,
Nor the gleam of the secret restorest
 That has faded from woodland and sky.
A presence more sad and sober
 Invests the rock and the tree;
And the aureole of October
 Lights the maples, but darkens me.

TO J. T. FIELDS

Elmwood, Dec. 20, 1868.

My dear Fields,— . . . I read your advertisement in the *Nation*, and discovered with some surprise what a remarkable person I was. It is lucky for Dante and them fellers that they got their chance so early. I hope I shall still be able to meet my friends on an easy footing. I trust I can unbend without too painful an air of condescension. But make the most of me, my dear Fields, while you have me. I begin to fear an untimely death. Such rare apparitions are apt to vanish as unexpectedly as they come. There is no life-insurance for these immortals. They have their length of days on t'other side. For my part I don't understand how Bryant holds out so long. Yet it was pleasant to see him renewing his youth like the eagles, in that fine poem about the trees. He deserves to have a tree planted over his grave, which I wouldn't say of many men. A cord of wood should be a better monument for most. There was a very high air about those verses, a tone of the best poetic society, that was very delightful. Tell Mrs. Fields that I think they justify his portrait.

Your January *Atlantic* was excellent. O. W. H. never wrote more to my mind, so genial, so playfully tender. And Howells. Barring a turn of phrase here and there, I think that as good a thing as you ever printed.* It had the uncommon merit of being interesting. That boy will know how to write if he goes on, and then we old fellows will have to look about us. His notice (I

* A paper entitled "Gnadenhütten."

suppose it was his) of Longfellow's book was a masterpiece of delicate handling. How fair it was, and yet what a kindly discretion in turning all good points to the light! Give my love to him, and tell him I miss him much. Also, in noticing my book, to forget his friendship, and deal honestly with me like a man.

With kind regards to Mrs. Fields and a merry Xmas to both of you (you have made more than one of mine merrier before now),

Yours ever,

J. R. L.

TO E. L. GODKIN

Elmwood, New Year, 1869.

My dear Godkin,—Thinking you might not otherwise see it, I enclose you a paragraph from an harangue of Miss Dickinson's at the Boston Music Hall last night—31st December. I don't send it because you will care for what she says about the *Nation*—which is weak enough—but because it will give you a chance to say a timely word on an important subject. This theory of settling things by what anybody may choose to consider "humanity," instead of trying to find out how they may be settled by knowledge, is a fallacy too common in this country. When one recollects that the Scythians (whoever they were) used to eat their grandfathers out of humanity, one gets a little shy of trusting himself to it altogether, especially as one grows older. It is awful to contemplate—and yet profoundly instructive—that, when we talk of the "moral nature of man," we mean the disposition that has been bred in him by habit—that is, by respect for the opinion of others become a habit:

ἦθος, *mores*, *mœurs*, *costumbri*, *costumi*, *sitte* (connected, I suppose, with the *suet* in *suetus*)—it is so in all tongues. One must swallow the truth, though it makes one's eyes water. Nor does this hinder one from believing in the higher Reason, as I for one firmly do. We have an instinct to prefer the good, other things being equal, and in exact proportion to our culture we know better what *is* good, and prefer it more habitually.

For your guidance, I add that there were some very good points in the lecture — better, indeed, than I expected. But it is very droll to me that Miss Dickinson shouldn't see that her "humanity" style of setting things right (by instinct, namely) is the very shillelah method she condemns so savagely in the Irish. Is it not?

The *Nation* continues to be a great comfort to me. I agree so entirely with most of its opinions that I begin to have no small conceit of my own wisdom. You have made yourself a Power (with a big p), my dear Fellow, and have done it honestly by honest work, courage, and impartiality. . . .

Yours always,

J. R. Lowell.

TO THE SAME

Elmwood, Jan. 8, 1869.

My dear Godkin,—Don't think I have gone mad that I so pepper you with letters—I have a reason, as you will see presently. But in the first place let me thank you for the article on Miss Dickinson, which was just what I wanted and expected, for (excuse me) you preach the best lay-sermons I know of. I know it is a weakness and all that, but I was born with an impulse to

tell people when I like them and what they do, and I look upon you as a great public benefactor. I sit under your preaching every week with indescribable satisfaction, and know just how young women feel towards their parson—but let Mrs. Godkin take courage, I can't marry you! . . .

My interest in the *Nation* is one of gratitude, and has nothing to do with my friendship for you. I am sure, from what I hear said against you, that you are doing great good and that you are respected. I may be wrong, but I sincerely believe you have raised the tone of the American press.

I don't want to pay for the *Nation* myself. I take a certain satisfaction in the large F. on the address of my copy. It is the only thing for which I was ever deadheaded. But I wish to do something in return. So I enclose my check for $25, and wish you to send the paper to five places where it will do most good to others and to itself. Find out five College reading-rooms, and send it to them for a year. Those who read it will want to keep on reading it. I can think of no wiser plan. Send one to the University of Virginia and one to the College of South Carolina. One, perhaps, would do good if sent to Paul H. Hayne, Augusta, Georgia. He was a rebel colonel, I believe, but is in a good frame of mind, if I may judge from what he has written to me. . . .

TO W. D. HOWELLS

Elmwood, Under the Rain, 1869.

My dear Boy,—You know very well that I would



Engd by H.B. Hall & Sons, N.Y.

Paul Hamilton Hayne.

PUBLISHED BY HOWARD & HULBERT, N.Y.

rather have you fond of me than write the best essay that ever Montaigne conceived as he paced to and fro in that bleak book-room of his. But for all that, I am grateful for what you say, since a gray beard brings self-distrust—at least in my case, who never had any great confidence in anything but Truth.

But what I write this for is only to say that to be sure I knew who the "young Vermont sculptor" was,* and pleased myself with alluding to him for your sake; for when my heart is warm towards any one I like all about him, and this is why I am so bad (or so good) a critic, just as you choose to take it. If women only knew how much woman there is in me, they would forgive all my heresies on the woman-question — I mean, they would if they were not women.

But then I am a good critic about one thing, and I see how you have mixed *me* and my essay. Why, I was thinking only this morning that if I could have you to lecture to I could discourse with great good-luck, for you always bring me a reinforcement of spirits.

Well, whatever happens, you can't be sorry that I thought so much of you as I do.

With kindest regards to Mrs. Howells,

Always affectionately yours,

J. R. L.

TO J. T. FIELDS

Elmwood, March 23, 1869.

My dear Fields,—I don't see why the New York poets should have all the sonnets to themselves, nor why

* Mr. Larkin G. Mead, the brother-in-law of Mr. Howells.

we shouldn't be littery now and then as well as they. With the help of Walker's "Rhyming Dictionary" and Lemprière, I have hammered out fourteen lines to you, which I honestly think are as much like Shakespeare's sonnets as some others I have seen. Your name does not consent so kindly to an invocation as Stoddard or Taylor or Boker or Richard or Bayard, which, albeit trochees, may well displace an iambus in the first foot.

"Richard, thy verse that like molasses runs," launches your sonnet without a hitch. I tried at first to evade the difficulty by beginning boldly,

> James T., the year, in its revolving round,
> Hath brought once more the tributary pig—

but it wants that classical turn which lends grace to your true sonnets as shaped by the great masters in this kind of writing. So I have hit on another expedient, which I think will serve the turn. As I find some of my critics blame me as too scholarly and obscure because I use such words as microcosm—which send even *well-read* men to their dictionaries—I have added a few notes:

> Poseidon[1] Fields, who dost the[2] *Atlantic*[3] sway,
> Making it swell, or flattening at thy will!
> O glaucous[4] one, be thou propitious still
> To me, a minnum[5] dandled on thy spray![6]
> Eftsoons[7] a milk-white porkerlet[8] we slay.
> No sweeter e'er repaid Eumæus'[9] skill;
> A blameless Lamb[10] thereon might feed his fill,
> Deeming he cropped the new-sprung herb[11] of May.

Our board do thou and Amphitrite[12] grace;
Archbishop[13] of our literary sea,
Lay by thy trident-crozier for a space,
And try our forks; or, earless[14] to our plea,
Let this appease thee and the frown displace:
The Gurneys come and John[15]—then answer, *Oui!*[16]

[1] "Poseidon," a fabulous deity, called by the Latins Neptunus; here applied to Fields as presiding over the issues of the *Atlantic*.

[2] "the Atlantic," to be read "th' Atlantic," in order to avoid the *hiatus* or gap where two vowels come together. Authority for this will be found in Milton and other poets.

[3] "*Atlantic*," a well-known literary magazine.

[4] "Glaucus," between blue and green, an epithet of Poseidon, and an editor who shows greenness is sure to look blue in consequence.

[5] "Minnum," vulgo pro *minnow*, utpote species *minima* piscium.

[6] "Dandled on thy spray."—A striking figure. Horace has *piscium et summa genus haesit ulmo*, but the poverty of the Latin did not allow this sport of fancy with the double meaning of the word *spray*.

[7] "Eftsoons."—This word (I *think*) may be found in Spenser. It means soon after, i. e., before long.

[8] "Porkerlet," a pretty French diminutive, as in *roitelet*.

[9] "Eumæus," the swineherd of Ulysses, a character in Homer.

[10] "Lamb," a well-known literary character of the seventeenth century, chiefly remembered for having burnt his house to roast a favorite pig. He invented mint-sauce.

[11] "Herb"—grass.—Borrow a Bible, and you will find the word thus used in that once popular work.

[12] "Amphitrite," the beautiful spouse of Poseidon.

[13] "Archbishop."—This is the Elizabethan style. (N. B., the play is upon *sea* and *see*.) This term is beautifully, may I not say piously, appropriate, since the Grecian gods have all been replaced by Christian saints, and St. Anthony of Padua converted the finny nomads of the deep. He found a ready *herring*, I suppose.

[14] "Earless."—This is not to be taken literally, as in the case of Defoe, or as Hotspur misinterprets Glendower's "bootless." It means simply *deaf*.

[15] "John."—It is hardly necessary to say that there is but one John—to wit, J. Holmes, Esq., of Holmes Place.

[16] "*Oui*," a neat transition to the French tongue, conveying at once a compliment to the learning of the person addressed and an allusion to his editorial position. Editors and kings always say *We*.

There! I think I have made that clear enough except in one particular, namely, its meaning. I don't admit that a sonnet needs anything so vulgar—but this one means that I want you and Mrs. Fields to eat a tithe-pig ('tis an offering of William's) with us in about ten days from now. I will fix the day as soon as I find out when the fairy creature will be ripe.

I have corrected nearly all of one volume, and dreary work it is. I know nothing more depressing than to look one's old poems in the face. If Rousseau's brats had come back upon his hands from the *Enfans Trouvés*, he would have felt just as I do.

Always yours,
J. R. L.

TO THE SAME

Elmwood, April 1, 1869.

My dear Fields,—The late Governor Gore, of pious memory, having issued his proclamation for a fast, incontinently thereafter sent out invitations for a dinner upon the same day, and thereby lost as much credit for piety as he gained praise for hospitality. As a politician, the balance was clearly against him in a community whose belief in immortality was not based upon material nutriment. But as a man, it may be suspected that he lost nothing except in the opinion of those who were not invited. If Governor Claflin (if I am right in the name of our present illustrious chief magistrate) had known that my pig would have been exactly ripe on the 8th day of April, and that twenty-four hours (not to speak of forty-eight) would convert him into vulgar pork, he would have doubtless chosen another occasion

for proving his devotion to the principles of our Puritan forefathers. That sense of culinary propriety which led Moses to forbid the seething of a kid in its mother's milk would have induced *him* to spare my suckling the vulgarization of a single day longer amid the multitudinous temptations of the sty. Fancy that object of our tender solicitude exposed, like Eve, to the solicitation of an apple, still worse of some obscener vegetable! I will not even suggest a turnip, for that were too horrible. Even an unbeliever in the literal inspiration of Scripture would reject such an hypothesis with disgust. Deeply revolving these things, and also the fact that Gurney can't come either on Wednesday or Friday, I must fix on Thursday next as the day of consummation.

Those who have read the excellent Claflin's proclamation (I have not) can take their measures accordingly. They can deny themselves the second helping. They can leave a bit of untasted *cracklin* on their plates, or, defying the wrath of an offended deity with a *tant de bruit pour une omelette*, they can eat their fill. At any rate, Thursday the 8th is the day — if I have a house over my head.

I say this because we have been April-fooled with an alarm of fire to-day. The house was thick with smoke to the coughing-point, and I sent for a carpenter to rip up here and there. We were undoubtedly afire, but, thank God, we went out. It was not pleasant while it lasted, but Vulcan showed a consideration I can't thank him too much for in coming by daylight. But fancy seeing smoke come up through the chinks of your garret-floor in a house like this! Yet this we saw. I con-

fess I expected to spend the night at my sister's in Roxbury, and even now I am almost afraid to go to bed lest it may begin again. I had a vision of our two chimneys standing like the ruins of Persepolis.

Therefore, if we don't burn down, we shall expect you on Thursday; and if we *do*, why, then we will invite ourselves to dine with you.

Yours always,

J. R. L.

TO THE SAME

Elmwood, April 5, 1869.

My dear Fields,—If it had been as hard for Eve to eat her apple as for me to get my pig eaten, we should all be at this moment enjoying an income of a million a minute and our expenses paid—with roast pig growing on every bush. The Greeks thought a great man struggling with the storms of fate the sublimest spectacle offered to mortal eyes; but if Œdipus begging a meal's meat be an awful sight, is there not even something more pathetic in the case of him who strives in vain to give away a dinner? The pleasure of eating roast pig on Fast Day, in such company as I reckoned on, could only have been increased by adding a stray Jew to our commensals. But, alas, "What is this life? What asken man to have?" Our cook is gone! And though Lenore's mother said many sensible things to console her for a far lighter loss—that of a dragoon—yet the answer was conclusive,

"*O Mutter, Mutter, hin ist hin!*"

If hin isn't hin, what is? In short, we must postpone

our dinner. That pig, like Hawthorne's youth asleep by the fountain, will never know how near Fate came to him and passed on.

I hope by Thursday week to have supplied the place of the delinquent—perhaps to our common advantage. Mary was a cook merely by a brevet conferred by herself, and I doubt whether she had the genius for that more transcendental touch which such a subject of unfallen innocence demands. The little creature might have been heathenishly sacrificed instead of being served up with that delicacy which befits Xtians. In such cases, a turn more or a turn less may lose all, and one who might afterwards have grown up into a learned pig (who knows but into a Professor!) is cut off untimely to no good purpose. Let us hope for the best—let us hope that if *we* can't have him, the world may gain a Bacon or a Hogg or a Pig-ault Lebrun. If we get a cook—and we already hear of one—our festival is but prorogued; luckily, *he* will not be too old, even with an added week. I shall send word at once, so think of a dinner being put off because there won't be a death in the family! My heart feels like a pig of lead;

But I am always affectionately yours,

J. R. L.

Don't think I have had a paralysis; I have only bought a gold pen.

TO MISS NORTON

Elmwood, April 6, 1869.

. . . Authors, my altogether dear woman, can't write letters. At best they squeeze out an essay now and

then, burying every natural sprout in a dry and dreary *sand-flood*, as unlike as possible to those delightful freshets with which your heart overflows the paper. *They* are thinking of their punctuation, of crossing their *t's* and dotting their *i's*, and cannot forget themselves in their correspondent, which I take to be the true recipe for a letter. . . . Now, you know that the main excellence of Cambridge is that nothing ever happens there. Since the founding of the College, in 1636, there has been, properly speaking, no event till J. H. began to build his shops on the parsonage-lot. . . . Elmwood is Cambridge at the fifth power, and indeed one of the great merits of the country is that it narcotizes instead of stimulating. Even Voltaire, who had wit at will, found Ferney an opiate, and is forced to apologize to *his* cleverest correspondent, Mme. du Deffand (do you remark the adroitness of the compliment in my italicized pronoun?) for the prolonged gaps, or yawns, in his letter-writing. Cowper, a first-rate epistolizer, was sometimes driven to the wall in the same way. There is something more than mere vacancy, there is a deep principle of human nature, in the first question of man to man when they meet — "What is the news?" A hermit has none. I fancy if I were suddenly snatched away to London, my brain would prickle all over, as a foot that has been asleep when the blood starts in it again. Books are good dry forage; we can keep alive on them; but, after all, men are the only fresh pasture. . . .

We have had a very long winter with very little snow. It is still cold, but the birds are come, and the impatient lovers among them insist on its being spring. I

25/2



heard a bluebird several weeks ago, but the next day came six inches of snow. The sparrows were the first persistent singers, and yesterday the robins were loud. I have no doubt the pines at Shady Hill are all a-creak with blackbirds by this time. . . .

I have nothing else in the way of novelty, except an expedient I hit upon for my hens who were backward with their eggs. On rainy days I set William to reading aloud to them the Lay-sermons of Coleridge, and the effect was magical. Whether their consciences were touched or they wished to escape the preaching, I know not. . . .

TO LESLIE STEPHEN

April 24, 1869.

My dear Stephen,—By what system of mnemonics you contrived to remember those melon-seeds, I can't conjecture. I was glad to find that they were "Queen Anne's pocket-melons," because I was a subject of her most gracious majesty. I had not then established my independence. It pleased me also to have the fruit associated with some definite name. The former vagueness evaporated imagination (as Dr. Johnson might say) into a mere mist of conjecture. Now I can fancy Miss Hyde's august daughter pacing the gardens at Kensington, her pockets graced with the fruit which bore her name, and giving one to Harley or Bolingbroke or whatever purse-proud aristocrat happened to be the moment's favorite.

Within an hour after the seeds arrived they were in the ground, and already I watch with an almost paternal

solicitude the gradual expansion of their leaves. Thus far they are doing well, and if they escape the diseases of infancy, I hope you will sit down at table with their children's children. It was very good of you to remember them, and therefore just like you. They came like a fairy godmother's gift just as I was wishing I had them.

The great sensation of the day is Sumner's speech on the rejection of the treaty with Great Britain. I think he has expressed the national feeling of the moment pretty faithfully. Mind, I say of the moment. The country was blushing at the maudlin blarney of Reverdy Johnson, and that made the old red spot, where we felt that our cheek had been slapped, tingle again. If Mr. Adams had remained in England, I believe the whole matter might have been settled to the satisfaction of both parties. Now for some time to come that will unhappily be impossible. But our soberest heads do not think that Sumner is right in his statement of the law, and I think that the discussion which is likely to follow will clear the way for some reasonable settlement of the difficulty. That there is any annexation-cat under Sumner's meal I, for one, do not in the least believe. The absorption of Canada would be simply the addition of so much strength to the Democratic party—no bad thing in itself, by the way, but certainly not to the taste of the party now in power. Meanwhile, fools talk as glibly of a war with England as if it would not be the greatest wrong and calamity to civilization in all history. But I will not suffer myself to think of such an outrage. If the English government behave

with discretion and show a kindly feeling towards us whenever they have a chance, I think all will come out right. It was the *tone* of Palmerston's cabinet, more than anything else during the war, that made the sore. The speech of Chandler of Michigan, by the way, is a sample of our folly in the same way. It may do harm in England—*here* it has no significance whatever. . . .

In certain respects you can say nothing worse of us than we deserve. The power of "Rings" in our politics is becoming enormous. Men buy their seats in the Senate, and, of course, expect a profit on their investment. This is why the Senate clung so to the Tenure-of-Office bill. Grant means well, but has his hands tied. We are becoming a huge stock-jobbery, and Republicans and Democrats are names for bulls and bears. Pitch into us on all these matters as you will. You will do us good, for English papers (except by a few barbarians like me) are more read here than ever before, and criticism—no matter how sharp if it be honest—is what we need.

Whatever happens, my dear Stephen, nothing can shake or alter the hearty love I feel for you. I was going to say *affection*, but the Saxon word has the truer flavor. If you should ever be called upon to receive my sword hilt foremost, I am sure you will share your tobacco-pouch and canteen with me; and if ever I should take you prisoner, the worst you will have to fear will be to be made to eat too many pocket-melons. . . .

Always yours,

J. R. L.

TO E. L. GODKIN

Elmwood, May 2, 1869.

My dear Godkin,— . . . I note particularly (as merchants say) your remarks on British manners and our opinion of them. I would have said it myself—if only I had thought of it! A frequent cause of misapprehension is their not being able to understand that while there is no caste here, there is the widest distinction of classes. O my dear Godkin, they say we don't speak English, and I wish from the bottom of my heart we didn't—that we might comprehend one another! Impertinence and ill-will are latent in French—the Gaul can poison his discourse so as to give it a more agreeable flavor; but we clumsy Anglo-Saxons stir in our arsenic so stupidly it grits between the teeth. I wrote the essay you allude to, mainly with the hope of bringing about a better understanding. My heart aches with apprehension as I sit here in my solitude and brood over the present aspect of things between the two countries. We are crowding England into a fight which would be a horrible calamity for both—but worse for us than for them. It would end in our bankruptcy and perhaps in disunion. (When I remember that both Ireland and Scotland have been the allies of France, I don't feel sure which side the South would take.) As for Canada—I doubt if we should get by war what will fall to us by natural gravitation if we wait. We don't want Canada; all we want is the free navigation of the St. Lawrence, and that England will yield us ere long. We have no better ground of action than Dr. Fell would

have had because people didn't like him. It is not so much of what England *did* as of the *animus* with which she did it that we complain — a matter of sentiment wholly incapable of arbitration. Sumner's speech expressed the *feeling* of the country very truly, but I fear it was not a wise speech. Was he not trying rather to chime in with that feeling than to give it a juster and manlier direction? After all, it is not the *Alabama* that is at the bottom of our grudge. It is the *Trent* that we quarrel about, like Percy and Glendower. That was like an east wind to our old wound and set it a-twinge once more. Old wrongs are as sure to come back on our hands as cats. England had five thousand Americans (she herself admitted that she had half that number) serving enforcedly aboard her fleets. Remember what American seamen then were, and conceive the traditions of injustice they left behind them with an *exoriare aliquis!* That imperious despatch of Lord John's made all those inherited drops of ill blood as hot as present wrongs. It is a frightful tangle — but let us hope for the best. I have no patience with people who discuss the chances of such a war as if it were between France and Prussia. It is as if two fellows half way down the Niagara rapids should stop rowing to debate how far they were from the fall. As for Butler's "Wait till I catch you in a dark lane!" I have no words for it.

I could not at first think *what* book about Rome you meant. At length I recollected Duppa's "Papal Subversion." This, I take it, is the passage you mean. 'Tis a note on p. 79. "Such was the mild, or rather corrupt, state of the Roman government, that during the late

pontificate culprits were rarely punished with death for any crime: hence the slightest offence between individuals was a sufficient plea to justify any atrocity, and each often became avenger of his own wrong by assassination. [Hang the fellow! what a talent of prolongation he has!] To such an excess was this arrived that, during twenty-two years of the late reign, not less than eighteen thousand persons were murdered in public and private quarrels in the Ecclesiastical State alone, according to the bills of mortality in the governor's office, where from every district a return was annually made.

"It was a common opinion that it was the Pope's particular aversion to capital punishment that produced this laxity in the administration of justice, but I have it from high authority that he never saved any man from death who had been condemned by the law. Justice, indeed, would seem not to have been worse administered by the officers of the State in this reign than in that of his penultimate predecessor Rezzonico, in whose pontificate, which comprehended a period of little more than eleven years, ten thousand murders were committed in the papal dominions, of which at least one third were perpetrated in the city of Rome."

That is all I find to your purpose. Is this what you meant? While I am copying, I send you an extract from the "Letters of an American Farmer" (1782), by H. St. John Crèvecœur—dear book, with some pages in it worthy of Selborne White. . . . Perhaps it will help you to a paragraph. 'Tis a consolation to see that the gloomy forebodings of the Frenchman have not yet been realized.

"Lawyers . . . are plants that will grow in any soil that is cultivated by the hands of others, and, when once they have taken root, they will extinguish every vegetable that grows around them. The fortunes they daily acquire in every province from the misfortunes of their fellow-citizens are surprising! The most ignorant, the most bungling member of that profession will, if placed in the most obscure part of the country, promote litigiousness, and amass more wealth without labor than the most opulent farmer with all his toils. They have so dexterously interwoven their doctrines and quirks with the laws of the land, or rather they are become so necessary an evil in our present constitutions, that it seems unavoidable and past all remedy. What a pity that our forefathers, who happily extinguished so many fatal customs, and expunged from their new government so many errors and abuses, both religious and civil, did not also prevent the introduction of a set of men so dangerous! . . . The nature of our laws, and the spirit of freedom, which often tends to make us litigious, must necessarily throw the greatest part of the property of the colonies into the hands of these gentlemen. In another century the law will possess in the north what now the Church possesses in Peru and Mexico."—There's a gloomy prospect for us! We have only thirteen years' grace, and the century of prophecy will have dribbled away to the last drop.

Pray give Henry Wilson a broadside for dipping his flag to that piratical craft of the eight-hour men. I don't blame him for sympathizing with his former fellow-craftsmen (though he took to unproductive indus-

try at the first chance), but I have a thorough contempt for a man who pretends to believe that eight is equal to ten, and makes philanthropy a stalking-horse. Jove! what a fellow Aristophanes was! Here is Cleon over again with a vengeance.

It troubles me to hear that you of all men should be in low spirits, who ought to have store of good spirits in the consciousness that you are really doing good. The *Nation* is always cheering to me; let its success be a medicine to you. . . .

Affectionately yours,

J. R. L.

TO W. D. HOWELLS

Elmwood, May 12, 1869.

My dear Howells,—I have just got a letter from Miss Norton, in which she says, "What an enchanting little paper that is on 'My Doorstep Acquaintance,' by Mr. Howells! The pretty pictures in it come up before me as I write, and I am not quite sure whether Cambridge is in Italy—though, now I think of it, I know Italy is sometimes in Cambridge! When you see Mr. Howells, please tell him how much we all liked his sketches of our old friends."

There's for you! Put that in your pipe and smoke it! I liked it as much as they did.

Always affectionately yours,

J. R. L.

TO E. L. GODKIN

Elmwood, July 16, 1869.

My dear Godkin,—I have long been of that philoso-

pher's opinion who declared that "nothing was of much consequence"—at least when it concerned only ourselves, and certainly my verses were of none at all. I copied them for *you*, not for myself.

But the *Nation* is of consequence, and that's the reason I am writing now, instead of merely melting, to which the weather so feelingly persuades. You have never done better than in the last six months. Indeed, I think that you have improved with your growing conviction of your own power—a fact which has, if possible, increased my respect for you. At any rate, it proves that you are to be counted among the strong and not the merely energetic. Most editors when they feel their power are like beggars on horseback. *I* don't see why everybody doesn't take the *Nation*. I always read it *through*, and I never read the editorials in any other paper. My opinion is worth as much as the next man's, at least, and I see no paper that is so uniformly good. I was looking over some numbers of the *Pall Mall* yesterday, and didn't think it at all up to your (I mean E. L. G.'s) standard. This is not loyalty, but my deliberate opinion. Your reception* the other day should show you (and that is all I value it for) that your services to the cause of good sense, good morals, and good letters are recognized. You have *hit*, which is all a man can ask. Most of us blaze away into the void, and are as likely to bring down a cherubin as anything else. Pat your gun and say, "Well done, Brown Bess!" For 'tis an honest, old-fashioned

* At the Commencement Dinner at Harvard University.

piece, of straightforward short-range notions, and carries an ounce ball.

And in other respects the *Nation* has been excellent lately. I haven't seen a better piece of writing than that French *atelier*. It is the very best of its kind. Cherish that man, whoever he is. Whatever he has seen he can write well about, for he really *sees*. Why, he made me see as I read. The fellow is a poet, and all the better for not knowing it.

It is the unsettled state of affairs that is hurting you, if anything, though your advertising pages look prosperous. Wells, I am told, prophesies a crash for 1870, and fears that Congress will be weak enough to water the currency again—in other words, the national stock. I am not yet cured of my fear of repudiation, I confess. Democracies are kittle cattle to shoe behind. It takes men of a higher sense of honor than our voters mostly are to look at national bankruptcy in any other than a business light—and whitewash of all kinds is *so* cheap nowadays. Still, in spite of my fears, I think we shall come out all right, for a country where everybody does something has a good many arrows in its quiver. And though I believe that property is the base of civilization, yet when I look at France, I am rather reconciled to the contempt with which we treat its claims. There are, after all, better things in the world than what we call civilization even.

Always yours,

J. R. L.

TO W. D. HOWELLS

Elmwood, Aug. 11, 1869.

My dear Howells,—Up to time, indeed! The fear

is not about time, but space. You won't have room in your menagerie for such a displeaseyousaurus. The verses if stretched end to end in a continuous line would go clear round the Cathedral they celebrate, and nobody (I fear) the wiser. I can't tell yet what they are. There seems a bit of clean carving here and there, a solid buttress or two, and perhaps a gleam through painted glass—but I have not copied it out yet, nor indeed read it over consecutively.

As for the poem you sent me, I should have printed it when I sat in your chair. I will not criticise it further than to say that there is a great deal too much epithet. The author has wreaked himself on it. I should say *her*self, for I guess 'tis a gal.

Here was I, who have just written an awfully long thing,* going to advise the shortening of this other. But such is human nature, capable, I am thankful to say, of every kind of inconsistency. However, I am always consistently yours,

J. R. L.

TO THE SAME

Elmwood, Thursday.

. . . Thank you from the bottom of my heart, old fellow, for your note. If I divine that it is partly *me* that you like in the poem, I am all the more pleased. I don't care how much or how long we mutually admire each other, if it make us happier and kindlier, as I am sure it does. No man's praise, at any rate, could please me more than yours, and your affectionate messages will

* "The Cathedral."

send me to my college lecture this afternoon with a better heart. God bless you! Keep on writing, and among other things billets-doux like this, which made my eyelids tremble a little with pleasure.

Always affectionately yours,

J. R. L.

P. S. I haven't a minute to spare, but I am just going to read it over again, lest I missed any of the sweetness.

TO MISS NORTON

Elmwood, Sept. 6, 1869.

1. You order me, dear Jane, to write a sonnet.
2. Behold the initial verse and eke the second;
3. This is the third (if I have rightly reckoned),
4. And now I clap the fourth and fifth upon it
5. As easily as you would don your bonnet;
6. The sixth comes tripping in as soon as beckoned,
7. Nor for the seventh is my brain infécund;
8. A shocking rhyme! but, while you pause to con it,
9. The eighth is finished, with the ninth to follow;
10. As for the tenth, why, that must wedge between
11. The ninth and this I am at present scrawling;
12. Twelve with nine matches pat as wings of swallow;
13. Blushingly after that comes coy thirteen;
14. And this crowns all, as sailor his tarpauling.

I confess that I stole the idea of the above sonnet from one of Lope de Vega's, written under similar circumstances. Now, in that very sonnet Lope offers you a bit of instruction by which I hope you will profit and never again ask for one in twelve lines. He says, in so many words,

"*Catorce* versos dicen que es soneto,"

one more than even the proverbial baker's dozen, which shows the unthriftiness of poets in their own wares—or, perhaps you will say, their somewhat tiresome liberality. I dare say most sonnets would be better if cut off, like the cur's tail, just behind the ears. Having given you this short and easy lesson in the essential element of Petrarch's inspiration, I now proceed to do another sonnet in the received sentimental style of those somewhat artificial compositions.

Ah, think not, dearest Maid, that I forget!
Say, in midwinter doth the prisoned bee
Forget the flowers he whilom held in fee?
In free-winged fantasy he hovers yet
O'er pansy-tufts and beds of mignonette.
And I, from honeyed cells of memory
Drawing in darkened days my stores of thee,
Seek La Pacotte on dream-wings of regret.
I see thee vernal as when first I saw,
Buzzing in quest of sugar for my rhyme;
And this, my heart assures me, is Love's law,
That he annuls the seasons' frosty crime,
And, warmly wrapped against Oblivion's flaw,
Tastes in his garnered sweets the blossoming thyme.

Perhaps the eighth verse would be better thus,

Fly on dream-wings to La Pacotte, you bet!

That, at least, has the American flavor, which our poetry is said to lack. . . . I do not mean by the twelfth verse to insinuate anything unfeeling. It is merely to be in keeping with the laws of the sonnet, and to bring the

thought back to where it set out, like a kitten playing with its own tail. But I will confess to you that I am getting so gray that *I* see it; so you may be sure there is not much to choose between me and the traditional badger. Happily, I am grown no stouter, though already "more fat than bard beseems."

But why have I not written all this while? . . . For all August I have a valid excuse. First, I was writing a poem, and second, a pot-boiler. The poem turned out to be something immense, as the slang is nowadays, that is, it ran on to eight hundred lines of blank verse. I hope it is good, for it fairly trussed me at last and bore me up as high as my poor lungs will bear into the heaven of invention. I was happy writing it, and so steeped in it that if I had written to you it would have been in blank verse. It is a kind of religious poem, and is called "A Day at Chartres." I remember telling Charles once that I had it under my hair. . . . I can't tell yet how it will stand. Already I am beginning to—to—you know what I mean—to taste my champagne next morning. However, you will see it in the January *Atlantic*, and you must try to like it and me. I can't spare either. . . .

TO MISS CABOT

Elmwood, Sept. 14, 1869.

. . . The advantage of study, I suspect, is not in the number of things we learn by it, but simply that it teaches us the one thing worth knowing—not *what*, but *how* to think. Nobody can learn that from other people. Apart from the affection I feel for you, I have always

liked in you a certain independence of character and a tendency to judge for yourself. Both these are excellent if kept within bounds, if you do not allow the one to degenerate into insubordination of mind and the other into hastiness of prejudice. Now, I am inclined to think that one may get a reasonably good education out of any first-rate book if read in the right way. Take Dante or Milton, for example. If you like or dislike a passage, insist with yourself on knowing the reason why. You are already unconsciously learning rhetoric in the best way. Then ask yourself what is contemporary and what perdurable in his theology and the like. You are not only studying the history of his time, but also, what is vastly more important, [learning] to look with deeper insight at that of your own time. You see what I mean. If all roads lead to Rome, so do all roads lead out of Rome to every province of thought. What one wants is to enlarge his mind, to make it charitable, and capable of instruction and enjoyment from many sides. When one has learned that, he has begun to be wise—whether he be *learned* or not is of less consequence. How is it possible, I always ask myself in reading, that a man *could* have thought so and so, and especially a superior man? When I have formed to myself some notion of that, I understand my contemporaries better, for every one of us has within ten miles' circuit specimens of every generation since Adam.

But I am preaching, my dear Lilla, and you don't like any preaching but Dr. Clarke's perhaps? What I mean is that our aim should be not to get many things into one's head, but to get *much*, and one gets that when he has learned the relations of any one thing to all others;

because in so doing he has got the right way of looking at anything. I have no fear that your education will be neglected, because I am sure that you will look after it yourself—because, moreover, you have an alert nature and a scorn of ignoble things. . . .

TO THOMAS HUGHES

Elmwood, Cambridge, Sept. 18, 1869.

My dear Hughes,—We are all very well satisfied with the result of the match.* For my own part, I have always thought that "magnis tamen excidit ausis" was not a bad kind of epitaph. I should only be sorry if our defeat were attributed to want of bottom. Our crew had already pulled a four-mile race on their own water and won it against a crew of professional oarsmen. I think that in private we may claim a little on the score of change of climate, though, of course, they had to take their chance of that. I am particularly glad to know that you thought it a good pull, because you have a right to an opinion. I did not expect them to win, though I hoped they would. Especially I hoped it because I thought it would do more towards bringing about a more friendly feeling between the two countries than anything else. I am glad to think it has had that result as it is. It isn't the *Alabama* claims that rankle, but the tone of the English press, or the more influential part of it. There is a curious misapprehension about us over there, as if we had been a penal colony. For example:

* The race between an Oxford and a Harvard four-oar crew, on the Thames, of which Mr. Hughes was the umpire.

when Longfellow was in Rome he drove out to some races on the Campagna. There his carriage chanced to be abreast of one in which two English ladies were discussing the manners of American girls. At last one of them summed up thus: "Well, you know, what can be expected of people who are all descended from laboring men or convicts?" Now, between ourselves, one of the things that has always amused me in my brother New-Englanders is their fondness for family trees. You will remember that I made a little fun of it in the introduction to the first series of the "Biglow Papers." It is a branch of arboriculture in which I take no great interest myself, but my father was as proud of his pedigree as a Talbot or a Stanley could be, and Parson Wilbur's genealogical mania was a private joke between us. Now, you can understand how the tone I speak of would be resented. I think Sumner's speech as an argument a mere colander, but it represented the temper of our people pretty exactly. On your side, it was all along assumed that England had a point of honor to maintain, and all along implied that this was something of which we naturally had no conception, and to which, of course, our side could lay no claim. Don't you see? Now, our point of honor runs back to the *Little Belt* and the *President*, as long ago as 1809 or so. In those days American seamen belonged to the very best class of our population, and there were five thousand such serving enforcedly on board your ships-of-war. Put it at half the number (which was admitted on your side), and fancy what a ramification of bitter traditions would thread the whole country from these men and their descendants. You

know that such little chickens always come home to roost, and these are just beginning to flock in now. I am writing all this that you may understand something of the feeling here.

I think that all we want is to be treated in a manly way. We don't want to be flattered, and some of us thought your newspapers went quite far enough in that direction just after the war. Tell us the truth as much as you like, it will do us good; but tell it in a friendly way, or at least not quite so much *de haut en bas*. Your letter in accepting the umpireship in the race hit precisely the right key. There are plenty of sensible men on this side of the water (more, I think, than I have found in any other country)—men, I mean, who are governed rather more, in the long run, by reason than by passion or prejudice. I did not like Sumner's speech, nor did the kind of men I speak of like it (and their opinions, though less noisily expressed, have more influence on our politics than you would suppose); but I am inclined to think it has done more good than harm. It served as a vent for a great deal of fire-damp that might have gone off with an explosion, and satisfied that large class who need the "you're another" style of argument. If only some man in your government could find occasion to say that England had mistaken her own true interest in the sympathy she showed for the South during our civil war! No nation ever apologizes except on her knees, and I hope England is far enough from being brought to that—no sane man here expects it—but she could make some harmless concessions that would answer all the purpose. I have pretty good authority for thinking that Motley was

instructed to make no overtures on the *Alabama* matter, and perhaps it is as well to let things subside a little first. Still, I dread to have the affair left unsettled a moment longer than can be helped. Your greatest safeguard against us would be a settlement of the Irish land question. It is a heroic remedy, but you must come to it one day or other. I never believed in the efficacy of disestablishment. Arthur Young told you where the real trouble was eighty odd years ago. My fear is (as things stand now) that if England should get into a war, we could not (with our immense length of coast) prevent privateers from slipping out, and then! It would be a black day for mankind.

You ask me who "Bob Wickliffe" was. He was a senator from Kentucky, and Kentucky undertook to be neutral. It was a bull I thought we should take by the horns at once, as we had at last to do.

I have been writing a poem which I think you will like. It will be published in the *Atlantic Monthly* for January, and I shall send you a copy. I did not send you my last volume, because I knew you would get it earlier from Macmillan, and you did not need it to assure you of my friendship. Mabel gives us hope of a visit from you next year. I need not say how welcome you will be.

Always heartily yours,

J. R. Lowell.

TO W. D. HOWELLS

Elmwood, Sept. 22, 1869.

My dear Howells,—Forgive this purple ink. It was

palmed upon me the other day, who in my simple conservatism thought all the ink in the world was made by Maynard & Noyes, as it used to be. I have a horrible suspicion that it may be a "writing fluid"—still worse, that it may treacherously turn black before you get this, and puzzle you as to what I am driving at. It is now, on my honor, of the color of pokeberry juice, whereof we used to make a delusive red ink when we were boys. I feel as if I were writing ancient Tyrian, and becoming more inscrutable to you with every word. Take it for "the purple light of love," and it will be all right.

I have a great mind (so strong is the devil in me, despite my years) to give you an awful pang by advising you not to print your essay. It would be a most refined malice, and pure jealousy, after all. I find it delightful, full of those delicate touches which the elect pause over and the multitude find out by and by—the test of good writing and the warrant of a reputation worth having. As Gray said of the romances of Crébillon *fils*, I should like to lie on a sofa all day long and read such essays. You know I would not flatter Neptune for his trident—as indeed who would, that did not toast his own bread? —but what you write gives me a real pleasure, as it ought; for I have always prized in you the ideal element, not merely in your thought, but in your way of putting it.

And one of these days, my boy, you will give us a little volume that we will set on our shelves, with James Howell on one side of him and Charles Lamb on the other—not to keep *him* warm, but for the pleasure *they* will take in rubbing shoulders with him. What do you

N.° 35



P. CORNEILLE.

Devéria del. Couché fils dir. Dequevauviller sculp.

say to that? It's true, and I hope it will please you to read it as much as it does me to write it. Nobody comes near you in your own line. Your Madonna would make the fortune of any essay—or that pathetic bit there in the graveyard — or your shop of decayed gentilities—or fifty other things. I do not speak of the *tone*, of the light here and shade there that tickle *me*.

You were mighty good to procure me that little accession of fortune.* It will give Madam a new gown—a luxury she has not had these three years—and will just make the odds between feeling easy and pinched. It may be even a public benefaction—for I attribute the late gale in large part to my frantic efforts at raising the wind in season for my autumnal taxes. Yet a dreadful qualm comes over me that I am paid too much. When a poet reads his verses he has such an advantage over types! You will gasp when you see me in print. But never fear that I shall betray my craft. Far from me the baseness of refunding! Indeed I seldom keep money long enough for Conscience to get her purchase on me and her lever in play. What a safety there is in impecuniosity! And yet—let me read Dryden's Horace's "Ode to Fortune," lest if a million come down upon me I should be so in love with security as to put aside the temptation.

Now to the important part of my note. I want you to eat roast pig with me on Saturday next at half-past four P. M. Your commensals will be J. H., Charles Storey, and Professor Lane—all true blades who will sit till Mon-

* An additional payment for "The Cathedral."

day morning if needful. The pig is just ripe, and so tender that he would drop from his tail if lifted by it, like a mature cantaloupe from its stem. With best regards to Mrs. Howells,

Affectionately yours,

J. R. L.

TO MISS NORTON

Elmwood, Sept. 28, 1869.

My dearest old Friend,— . . . I am very busy. It is a lovely day, cool and bright, and the Clerk of the Weather has just put a great lump of ice in the pitcher from which he pours his best nectar. Last night, as I walked home from Faculty Meeting, the northern lights streamed up like great organ-pipes, and loveliest hues of pink, green, and blue flitted from one to another in a silent symphony. To-day, consequently, is cold and clear, with a bracing dash of north-west. Cutler is ill, and I am shepherding his flocks for him meanwhile—now leading them among the sham-classic pastures of Corneille, where a colonnade supplies the dearth of herbage; now along the sunny, broad-viewed uplands of Goethe's prose. It is eleven o'clock, and I am just back from my class. At four I go down again for two hours of German, and at half-past seven I begin on two hours of Dante. Meanwhile I am getting ready for a course of twenty University lectures, and must all the while keep the domestic pot at a cheerful boil. I feel somehow as if I understood that disputed passage in the "Tempest," where Ferdinand says,

47/2



Waltner del et sculp.

CHATEAUBRIAND

47/2



GEORGE SAND

Jouvet et C^ie^ Éditeurs Paris.

Imp. Chardon-Wittmann.

"Most busy least when I do it"—

for I am busy enough, and yet not exactly in my own vocation. . . . As for the Rousseau article, I was looking it over a few days ago—I am going to make a volume this fall, and it is not one of my best. I have not confidence enough in myself to write my best often. Sometimes in verse I forget myself enough to do it, but one ought to be popular. If ever I become so, you shall see a better kind of J. R. L. To me Rousseau is mainly interesting as an ancestor. What a generation lay hidden in his loins! and of children so unlike as Cowper and Wordsworth and Byron and Chateaubriand and Victor Hugo and George Sand! It is curious that the healthier authors leave no such posterity. . . .

Your ever constant

J. R. L.

TO T. B. ALDRICH

Elmwood, Nov. 30, 1869.

My dear Aldrich,—It is a capital little book*—but I had read it all before, and liked it thoroughly. It has been pretty much all my novel reading all summer. I think it is wholesome, interesting, and above all, natural. The only quarrel I have with you is that I found in it that infamous word "transpired." E-pluribus-unum it! Why not "happened"? You are on the very brink of the pit. I read in the paper t'other day that some folks had "extended a dinner to the Hon." Somebody or other. There was something pleasing to the baser

* "The Story of a Bad Boy."

man in fancying it held out in a pair of tongs, as too many of our Hon'bles deserve—but consider where English is going!

I know something about Rivermouth myself—only before you were born. I remember in my seventh year opening a long red chest in the "mansion" of the late famous Dr. Brackett, and being confronted with a skeleton—the first I had ever seen. The "Mysteries of Udolpho" were nothing to it, for a child, somehow, is apt to think that these anatomies are always made so by foul means, a creed which I still hold to a certain extent.

However, I am not writing to tell you about myself—but merely to say how much I like your little book. I wish it had been twice as large! I shall send you a thin one of my own before long, and shall be content if it give you half the pleasure. Make my kind remembrances acceptable to Mrs. Aldrich, and tell the twins I wish they may both grow up Bad Boys.

Cordially yours,

J. R. Lowell.

TO E. L. GODKIN

Elmwood, Dec. 3, 1869.

. . . I think the article in the last *Quarterly* settles the Byron matter—and settles it as I expected. After this, any discussion of the particular charge in question seems to me a mere waste of pen and ink, perhaps (worse) of temper too. I doubt, even if this were not so, if I could at present treat it with the all-roundness it deserves. With four lectures a week, I am as busy as I can bear just now.

But I write to ask a favor of you. I read in my newspaper this morning that the dramatic critic of the *Daily News* has been giving a list of John Kemble's odd pronunciations. I should much like to see it, and thought it not unlikely that you might have a copy of the paper which you could spare me. If not, could you not get me one? I should be greatly obliged. . . .

TO C. E. NORTON

Elmwood, Dec. 10, 1869.

. . . My vacation was pretty well occupied with writing and rewriting my new poem, and then as usual coming back to the first draught as by far better than any after-thought. Those who have seen it think well of it. I shall contrive to send it you, and beg you not to read it in the *Atlantic*—for I have restored to it (they are printing it separately) some omitted passages, besides correcting a phrase here and there whose faultiness the stronger light of print revealed to me. How happy I was while I was writing it! For weeks it and I were alone in the world, till Fanny well-nigh grew jealous. You don't know, my dear Charles, what it is to have sordid cares, to be shivering on the steep edge of your bank-book, beyond which lies debt. I am willing to say it to you, because I know I should have written more and better. They say it is good to be obliged to do what we don't like, but I am sure it is not good for me—it wastes so much time in the mere forethought of what you are to do. And then I sometimes think it hard that I, who have such an immense capacity for happiness, should so often be un-

happy. I recoil, to be sure, with a pretty good spring, but I have learned what it is to despond. You know I don't sentimentalize about myself or I would not write this. You used to laugh when I told you I was growing dull, but it was quite true. A man is dull who can't give himself up without *arrière-pensée* to the present. I *do* lose myself (to find myself) in writing verse, and so I mean in some way to shape myself more leisure for it, even if I have to leave Elmwood. . . . I agree with Euripides that it is fitting—

Σοφὸν δὲ . . .
τόν θ' ὑμνοποιὸν, αὐτὸς ἂν τίκτῃ μέλη,
χαίροντα τίκτειν· ἢν δὲ μὴ πάσχῃ τόδε,
οὗτοι δύναιτ' ἂν, οἰκοθέν γ' ἀτώμενος,
τέρπειν ἂν ἄλλους· οὐδὲ γὰρ δίκην ἔχει.*

You will find this amplified in Juvenal's Seventh Satire. You see I am suffering a professor change! No; the truth is, I read Euripides through very carefully last winter, and took a great fancy to him. Æschylus for imagination (perhaps 'twas his time did it for him), Sophocles for strength, and Euripides for facility, invention, and *go*. I guess him to be the more simply poet of the three. Anyhow, he delights me much as Calderon does, not for any power of thought, but for the perhaps rarer power of pleasing. As one slowly grows able to think for himself, he begins to be partial towards the fellows who merely entertain. Not that I don't find thought too in Euripides. . . .

* "It is well that the poet, if he produce songs, should produce them with joy, for if, being troubled in himself, he felt it not, he could not delight others—the means would not be his."—*The Suppliants*, 182–85.

I sometimes feel a little blue over the outlook here, with our penny-paper universal education and our workingmen's parties, with their tremendous lever of suffrage, decrying brains. . . . But the more I learn, the more am I impressed with the wonderful system of checks and balances which history reveals (our Constitution is a baby-house to it!), and the more my confidence in the general common-sense and honest intention of mankind increases. When I reflect what changes I, a man of fifty, have seen, how old-fashioned my ways of thinking have become, that I have lived quietly through that awful Revolution of the Civil War (I was cutting my hay while such a different mowing went on at Gettysburg); in short, that my whole life has been passed in what they call an age of transition, the signs of the times cease to alarm me, and seem as natural as to a mother the teething of her seventh baby. I take great comfort in God. I think he is considerably amused with us sometimes, but that he likes us, on the whole, and would not let us get at the match-box so carelessly as he does, unless he knew that the frame of his Universe was fire-proof. How many times have I not seen the fire-engines of Church and State clanging and lumbering along to put out—a false alarm! And when the heavens are cloudy what a glare can be cast by a burning shanty! . . .

Our new President* of the College is winning praise of everybody. I take the inmost satisfaction in him, and think him just the best man that could have been chosen. We have a real Captain at last.

* President Eliot.

I was very glad to get your account of Ferney. No, I never was there. I was too foolishly true to my faith in the blessing of Unexpectedness to visit many shrines. If I stumbled on them, well and good. But I would give a deal now that I had seen old Michel Eyquem's château—the first modern that ever confronted those hectoring ancients without casting down his eyes, bless his honest old soul! Yes, and Ferney, too. For we owe half our freedom now to the leering old mocker with an earnest purpose in spite of himself.

I wish, with all my heart, I *could* see you for a moment! For a while last spring I thought it possible I might be sent abroad. Hoar was strenuous for it, and I should have been very glad of it then. . . . However, it all fell through, and I am glad it did, for I should not have written my new poem, and I hope to go abroad on my own charges one of these days, if I can only sell my land before I am too old. . . .

Well, I have been getting on with my University lectures as well as I could. Cutler was ill, and I had to take his classes in French and German—losing five weeks thereby. And then I worried myself out of sleep and appetite—and then I concluded to do the best I could under the circumstances. So I have been reading to my class with extempore commentary. I wrote out four lectures on the origin of the romance lingo and romantic poetry, and then took up Ferabras and Roland, and am now on the Trouvères. Twenty lectures scared me, and now my next is the sixteenth and I am not half through! . . .

We are having the most superb winter weather—

though I have lost two of the noblest days of it before my fire. (I am burning Goody Blake fuel, by the way, supplied by the new September gale.) I do not envy you your olive-trees, nor even your view of Florence, when I look out on the smooth white of my fields, with the blue shadows of the trees on it. Jane's feeling allusion to the Perseus gave me a twinge, though. I should like to see the lovely arches of that loggia again! Tell her not to turn up her dear nose at a statue the story of whose casting is worth half the statues in the world—yes, and throw in the poems too. . . .

TO CHARLES NORDHOFF

Elmwood, Dec. 15, 1869.

. . . You cannot set too high a value on the *character* of Judge Hoar. The extraordinary quickness and acuteness, the *flash* of his mind (which I never saw matched but in Dr. Holmes) have dazzled and bewildered some people so that they were blind to his solid qualities. Moreover, you know there are people—I am almost inclined to call them the majority—who are *afraid* of wit, and cannot see wisdom unless in that deliberate movement of thought whose every step they can accompany. I have known Mr. Hoar for more than thirty years, intimately for nearly twenty, and it is the solidity of the man, his courage, and his integrity that I value most highly. I think with you that his loss would be irreparable, if he should leave the cabinet for a seat on the bench. But I do not believe this to be so probable as the Washington correspondents would persuade us. I

do not speak by authority, but only upon inference from what I know. If any change take place, it will be one in which Judge Hoar heartily concurs and which he is satisfied will be for the good of the country. If any one is the confidential adviser of the President, I *guess* it is he. . . .

TO E. L. GODKIN

Elmwood, Jan. 24, 1870.

. . . I am very glad you found anything to like in my poem, though I am apt to be lenient with my friends in those matters, content if they tolerate *me*, and leaving what I write to that perfectly just fate which in the long run awaits all literature. The article of Renan I had not then read, but have read it since with a great deal of interest. I think I see what you mean.

I should have written you long ago but for the scrap I enclose—which may now come too late to be of any use. But after writing that, it occurred to me that a somewhat longer article, giving some account of the different theories as to what the *Grail* was, might be interesting. For that I wanted a book which I had sent as a pattern to the binder, and which he had promised me on Friday last. Of course it did not come, and so I send my correction of Sir G. B.'s nonsense as it stands.

You cannot choose a subject into which you will not infuse interest by thought and knowledge. The one you mention seems to me a remarkably good one, and I hope I shall be here to see and hear you. A Boston



ERNEST RENAN

Imp A. Quantin



audience is like every other in this—that they like a serious discussion of any topic, and have an instinct whether it will be well handled or no. We have had a course of mountebanks this winter, and people will be all the more hungry for something serious and instructive. That I am sure you will give them, whatever you talk about. . . .

Many thanks for the cutting from the *Daily News*. It was just what I wanted. Every one of Kemble's pronunciations is a Yankeeism, confirming me in my belief that these are mostly archaisms and not barbarisms. . . .

TO R. S. CHILTON

Elmwood, March 17, 1870.

. . . I had no notion what a conundrum I was making when I used the word "decuman"*—or decumane, as I should have spelt it. Where I got the word I am sure I don't know, nor had I the least doubt that it was to be found in all the dictionaries, till some one asked me what it meant. "Oh," I said, "you'll find it sure enough in Ovid somewhere." But no: Ovid speaks only of the tenth wave. "Well, then," I insisted, "try Lucan." He said ditto to Ovid. *Then* I hunted it up, and my Ducange defines it *fluctus vehementior sic nude dictus*, citing examples from Festus and Tertullian. Perhaps neither a lexicographer nor a Father of the Church is very good authority for Latin, but in Eng-

* In "The Cathedral,"

> ". . . shocks of surf that clomb and fell,
> Spume-sliding down the baffled decuman."

lish I have my right of common, and I wanted the word for its melodic value. So I used it. I don't write verses with the dictionary at my elbow—but I think I shall probably come across the word somewhere in English again, where I no doubt met with it years ago. A word that cleaves to the memory is always a good word—that's the way to test them. . . .

TO LESLIE STEPHEN

Elmwood, March 25, 1870.

My dear Stephen,—Your letter found me with a pipe in my mouth and a quarto volume containing *La Chevalerie Ogier l'Ardenois* on my knee—a mediæval cucumber from which I hope to extract more sunbeams than from many others on which I have experimented. The fields all about us are white with snow (thermometer 18° this morning), and the weather is paying us off for the violets we had in blossom on the 6th January. We are all well and unchanged. Mrs. Lowell and I have been gadding as far as Washington—our business being to deliver some lectures in Baltimore. In Washington we spent three days—quite long enough—and if the country depended on its representatives for its salvation, I should despair of it. I liked Grant, and was struck with the pathos of his face; a puzzled pathos, as of a man with a problem before him of which he does not understand the terms. But Washington left a very bad taste in my mouth, and I was glad to be out of it and back again with pleasant old Mrs. K—— in Baltimore. Of course, I had a good time with Judge Hoar.

He and Mr. Cox struck me as the only really strong men in the Cabinet.

I am glad you liked "The Cathedral," and sorry for anything in it you didn't like. The name was none of my choosing. I called it "A Day at Chartres," and Fields rechristened it. You see with *my* name the episode of the Britons comes in naturally enough (it is historical, by the way). The truth is, I had no notion of being satirical, but wrote what I did just as I might have said it to you in badinage. But, of course, the tone is lost in print. Anyhow, there is *one* Englishman I am fond enough of to balance any spite I might have against others, as you know. But I haven't a particle. If I had met two of my own countrymen at Chartres, I should have been quite as free with them. . . .

How I should like to come over and pay you a visit! But it seems more and more inaccessible, that other side of the water. Whenever I can turn my land into money I shall come across, but at present it is all I can do to pay the cost of staying where I am. What with taxes and tariffs, and the general high prices induced by the vulgar profuseness of my countrymen, a moderate income is fast becoming a narrow one in these parts. If I only had a few cadetships to sell! However, maybe one of these days a gray old boy will be trying to make out through his double eyeglass which is No. 16 in Onslow Gardens, and about half an hour thereafter Mrs. Stephen will be wondering whence comes that nasty smell of tobacco.

Affectionately ever,

J. R. L.

TO W. D. HOWELLS

Elmwood, Friday.

My dear Howells,—Who writes to me casts his bread on the waters. The carrier handed me your note on the road. I put it into my pocket and straightway forgot all about it.

We are told in a book (which I still look on as quite up to the level of any that have come out in my time) to do whatever we do with all our might. That's the way I forget my letters, and I hope I shall find my reward in the next world, for I certainly don't in this.

On the contrary, happening to thrust my hands into my pockets (I don't know why—there is seldom anything in them), I found your note, and it stuck into me like an unexpected pin in the girdle of Saccharissa. If you didn't want our company, you might want our room! Therefore, to be categorical, *I* am coming, as I said I would.

Mrs. Lowell has unhappily an inflamed eye, and is very sorry (for she prefers "My Summer in a Garden," I fear, to some more solid works done under her immediate supervision), and Miss Dunlap is in Portland. So the whole of our family can sit in one chair, like St. Thomas Aquinas's angels.

With kind regards to Mrs. Howells,

Affectionately yours always,

J. R. Lowell.

TO THOMAS HUGHES

Elmwood, June 11, 1870.

My dear Hughes,—The papers tell me you are com-

ing hither, but I fear the news is too good to be true. But if you are, you know who will be delighted to take you by the hand and to say "*Casa usted*" with more than Spanish sincerity.

If this reaches you in time, pray let me hear from you as to your plans.

Our newspapers read like an old-fashioned Newsletter with their rumors of war. The spirit of all the defunct quidnuncs seems to have entered the man who makes up the telegrams for the American press. But what an impudent scoundrel Louis Napoleon is, to be sure!

Come early and come often, as they say to the voters in New York.

In great haste

Affectionately yours,

J. R. Lowell.

TO THE SAME

Elmwood, July 18, 1870.

My dear Hughes,—I hope you will come hither as early as you can, for it will be vacation, and I can see more of you. And I want you to see my trees with the leaves on—especially my English elms, which I think no small beer of. I hope by the middle of August our worst heats will be over, for they began early this year. As I write the thermometer is 92 deg.

Already I have an invitation for you from a friend of mine at Newport (our great watering-place) whom I would like you to know. It is a good place to see our people—"shoddy" and other. While you are here, I will take you to Concord and show you such lions as

we have. We shall be delighted to see you and keep you as long as you can stay.

By the way, I was truly sorry not to see your friend Mr. Lawson again. He interested me very much with his simple sincere ways. I owe you a great deal also for letting me know Stephen, whom I soon learned to love.

This war in Europe shocks me deeply. But I can now understand better than before, perhaps, the feeling of so many Englishmen about "our" war. However, I never quarrelled with the feeling, but with the brutal way in which it was expressed.

"This" war seems begun in the most wanton selfishness, and I hope that the charlatan who has ridden France for so many years will at least get his quietus. I have never credited him with any greatness but unscrupulousness, an immense advantage with five hundred thousand bayonets behind it.

I have been deeply interested in your Irish Land bill. It concerns us also, for one of the worst diseases we have to cure in the Irish who come over here is their belief that the laws are their natural enemies. Give them property (or a chance at it) in the land, "coûte qu'il coûte." Fixity of tenure is only a palliative. It won't stand against the influences that are in the air nowadays. It was tried here on the Van Rensselaers' property in New York, and led to the "Anti-rent war." You are doing noble things, and in that practical and manly way which must always make England respectable in the eyes of foreigners. England is the only country where things get a thorough discussion before the people and by the best men.

Good-by and God bless you till I take you by the hand.

Always heartily yours,

J. R. Lowell.

TO THE SAME

Elmwood, Aug. 13, 1870.

My dear Hughes,—On one account alone can I say I am glad you are coming later. I hope by the time you get here it will be cooler. The three children in the furnace never saw anything worse than we have had for a month.

Of course, you must suit your plans to your change of route. All I ask is to have you here before vacation is over, 29th Sept. As to lecturing—the only argument in its favor is that it is the easiest way of turning an honest penny for a man who is used to speaking in public. If you should look at it from this point of view, you might easily make an interesting and instructive lecture on the labor-reform movements in England. But I would not do it under five hundred dollars a night.

I enclose a letter for you which came this morning from Mr. Forbes,* whom perhaps you saw in England. At any rate, he is a man worth knowing in every way.

It is very pleasant to be writing to you on this side of the water.

Quebec, by the way, is better than most things in Europe by its startling contrast. A bit of Louis Qua-

* Mr. John M. Forbes.

torze set down bodily in the middle of the nineteenth century.

The sooner you come the better, is all I have to say.

Yours always,

J. R. Lowell.

TO C. E. NORTON

Elmwood, Aug. 28, 1870.

. . . I had hoped during vacation to fill some gaps in my "Cathedral," but work has been out of the question. I have read a good deal of mediæval French poetry in the way of business—and nothing more. But my hopes of freedom brighten a little. Already there are inquiries after my land, and whenever I can sell it for enough to live on modestly I shall do it. One can't write poetry unless he give his whole life to it, and I long to do something yet that shall be as good as I can. Now and then I get a bit impatient, and I fear I wrote you last winter in some such mood. But you know I am pretty reasonable, and always strive to look at myself and my fortune from another man's point of view. I do not think it so hard for a solitary to see himself as others see him—the difficult thing is to act in accordance with your knowledge, an art I have never acquired. I believe no criticism has ever been made on what I write (I mean no just one) that I had not made before, and let slip through my fingers. . . .

The war in Europe has interested me profoundly, and if the Prussians don't win, then the laws of the great game have been changed, for a moral enthusiasm

always makes battalions heavier than a courage that rises like an exhilaration from heated blood. Moreover, as against the Gaul I believe in the Teuton. And just now I *wish* to believe in him, for he represents civilization. Anything that knocks the nonsense out of Johnny Crapaud will be a blessing to the world. How like a gentleman the King of Prussia shows in his despatches alongside of that *fanfaron* Napoleon! It refreshes me wonderfully, also, to see that the French don't show the quiet front under reverses that we did, and our trial was one of years.

. . . My only news (we never have any in Cambridge, and my *cordon sanitaire* of trees secludes me from such gossip as buzzes down in the village) is a visit from Tom Hughes, who is as frank and hearty and natural a dear good fellow as could be wished. He is now at Naushon, and comes back to us on Tuesday. Wednesday we go to Concord, to dine with Hoar. Hughes will leave us sooner than I like, in order to be back here for the laying of the corner-stone of Memorial Hall, 29th September. . . .

TO MISS NORTON

Elmwood, Oct. 14, 1870.

. . . We have been having a truly delightful visit from Hughes, who was as charming as man can be—so simple, hearty, and affectionate. He was with us a fortnight, off and on, and we liked him better and better. His only fault is that he *will* keep quoting the "Biglow Papers," which he knows vastly better than

I. I was astonished to find what a heap of wisdom was accumulated in those admirable volumes. There never was an Englishman who took this country so naturally as Hughes. I was really saddened to part with him—it was saying good-by to sunshine. We have had other agreeable Britons here this autumn. Bryce I especially liked, and Hughes brought with him a very nice young Rawlins.

All summer I have been studying old French metrical romances and the like, and have done an immense deal of reading—for which I have a talent, if for nothing else. During vacation—a good part of it—I must have averaged my twelve hours a day. And the use of it all? —for some lectures which I am reading to about a score of young women twice a week during the term. Think of *me* with thirty-six lectures on my mind, and you will understand why I am getting a little thin. . . . What good all this lumber will do me I find it hard to say. I long to give myself to poetry again before I am so old that I have only thought and no music left. I can't say, as Milton did, "I am growing my wings." I held back a copy of "The Cathedral," that I might write into it a passage or two, and now, after all, I have sent it by Theodora without them. My vein would *not* flow this summer. The heat dried up that with the other springs. . . .

TO C. E. NORTON

Elmwood, Oct. 15, 1870.

. . . Of course it could not but be very pleasant to me that Ruskin found something to like in "The Cathedral."

There is nobody whom I would rather please, for he is catholic enough to like both Dante and Scott. I am glad to find also that the poem *sticks*. Those who liked it at first like it still, some of them better than ever, some extravagantly. At any rate, it wrote itself; all of a sudden it was *there*, and that is something in its favor. Now Ruskin wants me to go over it with the file. That is just what I did. I wrote in pencil, then copied it out in ink, and worked over it as I never worked over anything before. I may fairly say there is not a word in it over which I have not thought, not an objection which I did not foresee and maturely consider. Well, in my second copy I made many changes, as I thought for the better, and then put it away in my desk to cool for three weeks or so. When I came to print it, I put back, I believe, *every one* of the original readings which I had changed. Those which had come to me were far better than those I had come at. Only one change I made (for the worse), in order to escape a rhyme that had crept in without my catching it.

Now for Ruskin's criticisms. As to words, I am something of a purist, though I like best the word that best says the thing. (You know I have studied lingo a little.) I am fifty-one years old, however, and have in some sense won my spurs. I claim the right now and then to knight a plebeian word for good service in the field. But it will almost always turn out that it has after all good blood in its veins, and can prove its claim to be put in the saddle. *Rote* is a familiar word all along our seaboard to express that dull and continuous burden of the sea heard inland before or after a great storm. The root of the word may

be in *rumpere*, but is more likely in *rotare*, from the identity of this sea-music with that of the *rote*—a kind of hurdy-gurdy with which the jongleurs accompanied their song. It is one of those Elizabethan words which we New-Englanders have preserved along with so many others. It occurs in the "Mirror for Magistrates," "the sea's *rote*," which Nares, not understanding, would change to *rore!* It is not to be found in any provincial glossary, but I caught it *alive* at Beverly and the Isles of Shoals. Like "mobbled queen," 'tis "good."

Whiff Ruskin calls "an American elevation of English lower word." Not a bit of it. I have always thought "the *whiff* and wind of his fell sword" in "Hamlet" rather fine than otherwise. Ben also has the word. "Downshod" means shod with down. I doubted about this word myself—but I wanted it. As to "misgave," the older poets used it as an active verb, and I have done with it as all poets do with language. My *meaning* is clear, and that is the main point. His objection to "spume-sliding down the baffled decuman" I do not understand. I think if he will read over his "ridiculous Germanism" (p. 13 seq.) with the context he will see that he has misunderstood me. (By the way, "in our life alone doth Nature live" is Coleridge's, not Wordsworth's.) I never hesitate to say anything I have honestly felt because some one may have said it before, for it will always get a new color from the new mind, but here I was not saying the same thing by a great deal. *Nihil in intellectu quod non prius in sensu* would be nearer — though not what I meant. Nature (inanimate), which is the image of the mind, sympathizes with all our moods. I would have

numbered the lines as Ruskin suggests, only it looks as if one valued them too much. That sort of thing should be posthumous. You may do it for me, my dear Charles, if my poems survive me. Two dropt stitches I must take up which I notice on looking over what I have written. Ruskin surely remembers Carlyle's "whiff of grapeshot." That is one. The other is that *rote* may quite as well be from the Icelandic *at* hriota =to *snore;* but my studies more and more persuade me that where there is in English a Teutonic and a Romance root meaning the same thing, the two are apt to melt into each other so as to make it hard to say from which our word comes. . . .

TO THOMAS HUGHES

Elmwood, Oct. 18, 1870.

My dear old Friend,—Parting with you was like saying good-by to sunshine. As I took my solitary whiff o' baccy, after I got home, my study looked bare, and my old cronies on the shelves could not make up to me for my new loss. I sat with my book on my knee and mused with a queer feeling about my eyelids now and then. And yet you have left so much behind that is precious to me, that by and by I know that my room will have a virtue in it never there before, because of your presence. And now it seems so short—a hail at sea with a God-speed and no more. But you will come back, I am sure. We all send love and regret.

The day after you left us Rose discovered your thin coat, which she called a "duster." I had half a mind

to confiscate it, it was such a good one; but on second thoughts concluded that that was, on the whole, as good a reason for sending it back as for keeping it.

Letters continue to pour in, and I enclose them with the coat to No. 9 Lexington Avenue. There came also a telegram from Montreal, which I felt justified in opening. From what you had told me, I had no doubt that you had already answered in a letter. It only said that they should expect you on Tuesday.

As you will no doubt see Bryce and Dicey in London, pray tell them how sorry I was not to see more of them. They left many friends in Cambridge. If all Englishmen could only take America so "naturally" as you did! I think, if it could be so, there would never be any risk of war. That reminds me that I am sure your address has done great good. It has set people thinking, and that is all we need. I enclose a little poem from to-day's *Advertiser* which pleased me. I do not know who "H. T. B." is, but I think his verses very sweet, and Mrs. Hughes may like to see them. I would rather have the kind of welcome that met you in this country than all the shouts of all the crowds on the "Via Sacra" of Fame. There was "love" in it, you beloved old boy, and no man ever earns that for nothing—unless now and then from a woman. By Jove! it is worth writing books for—such a feeling as that. . . .

I am holding "Good-by" at arm's length as long as I can, but I must come to it. Give my kindest regards to Rawlins, and take all my heart yourself. God bless

you. A pleasant voyage, and all well in the nest when you get back to it.

Always most affectionately yours,

J. R. Lowell.

TO THE SAME

Elmwood, Feb. 7, 1871.

My dear Friend,—That friendship should be able to endure silence without suspicion is the surest touchstone of its sufficiency. I did not expect to hear from you very soon after your return, for I knew how busy you must be in many ways. But I was none the less glad to get your letter with assurance of your welfare. I should have written you, indeed, before this, but that I have been away from home three weeks reading some lectures in Baltimore.

We are all well except Mabel's Meg, who has fallen lame. After our warm autumn, Winter, as usual, has put his screws on, and when I walk it is over five feet thick of cast iron—for we have little snow. Several times within the last fortnight the thermometer has marked —8° Fahrenheit. But Cambridge is odd in this respect. Owing to our ice-trade the poorer people always bless a hard winter, which gives them work when other sources fail. Mild weather is always looked on as a misfortune.

I was much interested in your mutual-enlightenment scheme, though I am not at all clear as to its doing good here—I mean, whether a similar committee would be advisable on this side. Our people are so sensitively jealous just now that I fear it might arouse opposi-

tion of an ignorant sort, and so do more harm than good. I think they are settling down to a more rational view of the *Alabama* matter, and if you can keep the hotheads in Canada within bounds, all will go well. A very little more folly on their part would make "a pretty kettle of fish," if I know my countrymen. Even granting the claim of the Dominion to be legally admissible (which I doubt), you can no more persuade the bulk of our people of it than you were able to convince the English peasant of the righteousness of game laws. Moreover, and this heightens the danger, our fishermen are the class which among us most nearly resembles the borderers of the West, and they are the direct descendants of the men who suffered by British impressment before 1812. They have inherited a very bitter legacy of hatred, and might too easily be led by an unscrupulous demagogue like Butler to make reprisals. When I remember how like thunder out of a clear sky war comes nowadays, I wish to get drawn off from the atmosphere as much of the ominous electricity as may be.

I think it fortunate that Schenk (pronounced Skenk) is a Western man, because he will be free at least from any commercial animosity. He is said to be able, and he will represent an administration just now especially hostile to Sumner and his theory of constructive damages.

The Senate (who are the real arbiters after all) may be suspected of being in somewhat the same mood. Except for the fishery business, I am not inclined to agree with those who see danger in delay. Already the discussion of the law-points of neutrality has brought our people to a more reasonable frame of



H W Smith Sc

Yours,
James T. Fields

mind about the rights and duties of neutrals. The Irish element, I think, will never affect our foreign politics — nor our domestic, for that matter, except that through New York it may turn the scale of the next national election in favor of the Democrats; but the Democrats, once in power, will be in no more danger of rushing into a war with England than the Republicans—whom office has already largely corrupted. I still think (as I told you here) that a war would be more disastrous to us than to you, though the direst misfortune for both and for the advance of enlightened freedom.

As for the war in Europe, I am a Prussian, and believe it to be in the interest of civilization that a public bully (as France had become) should be soundly thrashed. The French will never be safe neighbors till the taint of Louis XIV. is drawn out of their blood. If the Prussian lancet shall effect this I shall rejoice. The misery I feel as keenly as anybody, but I remember that it might have been, but for German energy and courage, even worse on the other side of the Rhine. The Gaul has never been an amiable conqueror, and the Teuton has the longest historical memory among men. . . .

Elmwood expects you longingly again. With the heart's affection,

Yours always,

J. R. Lowell.

TO J. T. FIELDS

Elmwood, Feb. 11, 1871.

. . . I am looking forward to your next installment of Hawthorne. I read the first with great interest, and

wish you would give us more rather than less—especially in extracts from his letters. We don't seem likely to get a biography, and these in some sort supply it. . . . Be sure and don't leave out anything because it seems trifling, for it is out of these trifles only that it is possible to reconstruct character sometimes, if not always. I think your method is above criticism, and you have hit the true channel between the Charybdis of reticence and the Scylla of gossip, as Dr. Parr would have said. . . .

TO LESLIE STEPHEN

Elmwood, July 31, 1871.

. . . I have been selling my birthright for a mess of pottage, and find it so savory that I side with Esau more than ever. I don't know whether you ever suspected it (I hope you didn't—for I have noticed that you English use "beggar" as a clincher in the way of contempt), but I have been hitherto pretty well pinched for money. Our taxes are so heavy that nobody since Atlas ever carried such a burthen of real estate as I, and *he* wouldn't if he had been compelled to pay for it. Well, I have just (29th July was the happy date) been selling all that I held in my own right for enough to give me about $5000 a year and Mabel about $1400 more. This isn't much, according to present standards, but is as much as I want. It is a life-preserver that will keep my head above water, and the swimming I will do for myself. Then, I am going to have Elmwood divided. It is a bitter dose, but I have made up my mind to it, and make myself believe that I shall like

the house with a couple of acres as well as I do now with twelve times as much. The city has crept up to me, curbstones are feeling after and swooping upon the green edges of the roads, and the calf I used to carry is grown to a bull. I have gone over to the enemy and become a capitalist. I denounce the Commune with the best of them, and find it extremely natural that I should be *natus consumere fruges*—which means that I shall now grow consumedly frugal. I have weighed out the reasons (so far as I could decipher them) which you give me for coming over, and think them excellent—especially does your lavish offer of five shillings to sit in a certain chair weigh with me, and I shall certainly claim it. The reasons I couldn't read (for you became particularly runic or cuneiform or something worse in this passage) I took to be of some loving sort or other, and reciprocate them heartily. If everything goes well I mean to go abroad in a year from last June—that is, at the end of our next college year, and if I do, you will see a youth you never saw before. Property, sir, is the Ponce-de-Leon fountain of youth. I am already regenerate. I am the master of forty legions. I will kick the vizier's daughter, my wife, for a constitutional. And now cometh L. S. (I relish your initials now, and mentally add a D. to them), and prayeth that I would write some verses for his magazine!* I am given to understand by several gentlemen in easy circumstances (with whom I discuss the prices of stocks and the dangers of universal suf-

* Mr. Stephen had lately become editor of the *Cornhill Magazine*.

frage) that poets are notorious for nothing so much as the smallness of their balance at the banker's. Is there no danger of my losing caste by meddling in such matters—I who am casting about where I can steal a railway and share with Jem Fisk the applauses of my grateful countrymen? Bethink yourself, my dear Stephen. Put yourself for a moment in my position. I have a great affection for you, and shall lay it to the small experience of the world natural to the remote corner in which you dwell. I have no doubt it was kindly meant. A few Latin versicles, fruits of an elegant leisure, I might send you perhaps—but English—I must ask Vanderbilt's opinion. I will bear it in mind.

I should have sent "My Study Windows" (a hateful name, forced upon me by the publishers), but was waiting for a new edition, in which the misprints are corrected. I quite agree with you about Carlyle, and perhaps was harder on him than I meant, because I was fighting against a secret partiality. I go off also in a day or two on a fishing jaunt, to get rid of a pain in the head that has been bothering me. . . .

TO C. E. NORTON

Elmwood, Sept. 5, 1871.

. . . Yesterday, as I was walking down the Beacon Street mall, the yellowing leaves were dozily drifting from the trees, and the sentiment of autumn was in all the air; though the day, despite an easterly breeze, was sultry. I enjoyed the laziness of everything to the core, and sauntered as idly as a thistledown, thinking with a

pleasurable twinge of sympathy that the fall was beginning for me also, and that the buds of next season were pushing our stems from their hold on the ever-renewing tree of Life. I am getting to be an old fellow, and my sheaves are not so many as I hoped; but I am outwardly more prosperous than ever before—indeed, than ever I dreamed of being. If none of my stays give way, I shall have a clear income of over four thousand a year, with a house over my head, and a great heap of what I have always found the best fertilizer of the mind—leisure. I cannot tell you how this sense of my regained paradise of Independence enlivens me. It is something I have not felt for years—hardly since I have been a professor. . . . Meanwhile I am getting a kind of fame—though I never valued *that*, as you know—and what is better, a certain respect as a man of some solid qualities, which I *do* value highly. I have always believed that a man's fate is born with him, and that he cannot escape from it nor greatly modify it—and that consequently every one gets in the long run exactly what he deserves, neither more nor less. At any rate, this is a cheerful creed, and enables one to sleep soundly in the very shadow of Miltiades' trophy. What I said long ago is literally true, that it is only for the sake of those who believed in us early that we desire the verdict of the world in our favor. It is the natural point of honor to hold our endorsers harmless. . . . It is always my happiest thought that with all the drawbacks of temperament (of which no one is more keenly conscious than myself) I have never lost a friend. For I would rather be loved than anything

else in the world. I always thirst after affection, and depend more on the expression of it than is altogether wise. And yet I leave the letters of those I love unanswered so long! It is because the habits of authorship are fatal to the careless unconsciousness that is the life of a letter, and still more, in my case, that I have always something on my mind—an uneasy sense of disagreeable duties to come, which I cannot shake myself free from. But worse than all is that lack of interest in one's self that comes of drudgery—for I hold that a letter which is not mainly about the writer of it lacks the prime flavor. The wine must smack a little of the cask. You will recognize the taste of my old wood in this!

TO E. L. GODKIN

Elmwood, Dec. 20, 1871.

My dear Godkin,—I haven't looked into Taine's book since it first appeared seven years ago, and as I had no thought of reviewing it, I find that I did not mark it as I read. To write a competent review I should have to read it all through again, for which I have neither the time nor the head just now. I have just been writing about Masson's "Life of Milton," for the *North American*, and the result has convinced me that my brain is softening. You are the only man I know who carries his head perfectly steady, and I find myself so thoroughly agreeing with the *Nation* always that I am half persuaded I edit it myself! Or rather, you always say what I would have said—if I had only thought of it.



H. Caine

I am thinking of coming on to New York for a day or two next week, to see you and a few other friends. Somehow my youth is revived in me, and I have a great longing for an hour or two in Page's studio, to convince me that I am really only twenty-four, as I seem to myself. So get ready to be jolly, for I mean to bring a spare trunk full of good spirits with me and to forget that I have ever been professor or author or any other kind of nuisance. Just as I was in fancy kicking off my ball and chain, a glance at the clock tells me I must run down to College! But when I come to New York (since I can't get rid of them) I shall wear 'em as a breastpin. I have seen some nearly as large. Dickens had one when I first saw him in '42. Give my kindest regards to Mrs. Godkin.

Always affectionately yours,

J. R. L.

Give Schenck another shot. Also say something on the queer notion of the Republican party that they can get along without their brains. "Time was that when the brains were out the man would *die*," but *nous avons changé tout cela.*

TO MISS NORTON

Elmwood, Dec. 21, 1871.

. . . You forget that I know Dresden better than any other city except Rome, and I wish to know whether you are in the Altstadt or the Neustadt, and in what part of either, that I may figure you to myself the more comfortably. Is the theatre rebuilt? Are the Schloss

and the Japanische Palast in their old places? Does the sandstone statue of the reforming Elector still keep watch and ward at the corner of the little garden on which my room opened, where I heard the first European thrush, and had my daily breakfast-party of sparrows? Is there still a *Victoria regia* in the little greenhouse? Are there yellow-coated chairmen yet? And do the linkmen run before the royal coaches at night? And will the postman who brings you this wear a scarlet jacket as he should? And is it dreadfully cold, and do you worry yourself every morning by reducing Réaumur to Fahrenheit before you know how cold you can conscientiously feel? Dear me, how I should like to be over there just for an hour on Christmas eve, to stroll about with you and see again the prettiest sight I ever saw—the innocent jollity in the houses of the poor, and the dancing shadows of the children round the frugal Christmas-tree!

Here we are having winter in earnest. Thermometer four below zero this morning, and the whole earth shining in the sun like the garments of the saints at the Resurrection. Presently I shall walk down to the village to post this and drink a beaker full of the north-west—the true elixir of good spirits. . . .

George Curtis has just sent in his report on the Civil Service, and I expect much good from it. A man like him who knows the value of moderation, and who can be perfectly firm in his own opinions without stroking those of everybody else against the fur, was sure to do the right thing. I am glad his name will be associated with so excellent a reform. He deserved it. . . .

TO THE SAME

Elmwood, Feb. 17, 1872.

. . . Everything goes on here as usual. Three times a week I have my classes, one in Nannucci, "Letteratura del Primo Secolo," the other in Bartsch, "Chrestomathie de l'Ancien Français." On Wednesdays I have besides a University class, with whom I have read the "Chanson de Roland," and am now reading the "Roman de la Rose." On my off-days, the first thing in the morning I go over my work for the next day, and then renew my reading of Old French. The only modern book I have read for a long while is Comte Gobineau's "La Philosophie et les Religions de l'Asie Centrale," which I think one of the most interesting works I ever read. It tells you a great deal you did not know, and in a very lively way. If you have not read it I advise you to do so forthwith. . . .

. . . As for my being in low spirits, I haven't been so this long while. I thought it was constitutional with me, but since I have had no pecuniary anxieties I am as light as a bird. No, you are quite right; you wouldn't suspect it from my letters. But, my dear Jane, it takes a good while to slough off the effect of seventeen years of pedagogy. I am grown learned (after a fashion) and dull. The lead has entered into my soul. But I have great faith in putting the sea between me and the stocks I have been sitting in so long. . . .

TO F. H. UNDERWOOD

Elmwood, May 12, 1872.

. . . Don't bother yourself with any sympathy for me

under my supposed sufferings from critics. I don't need it in the least. If a man does anything good, the world always finds it out, sooner or later; and if he doesn't, why, the world finds *that* out too—and ought to. . . .

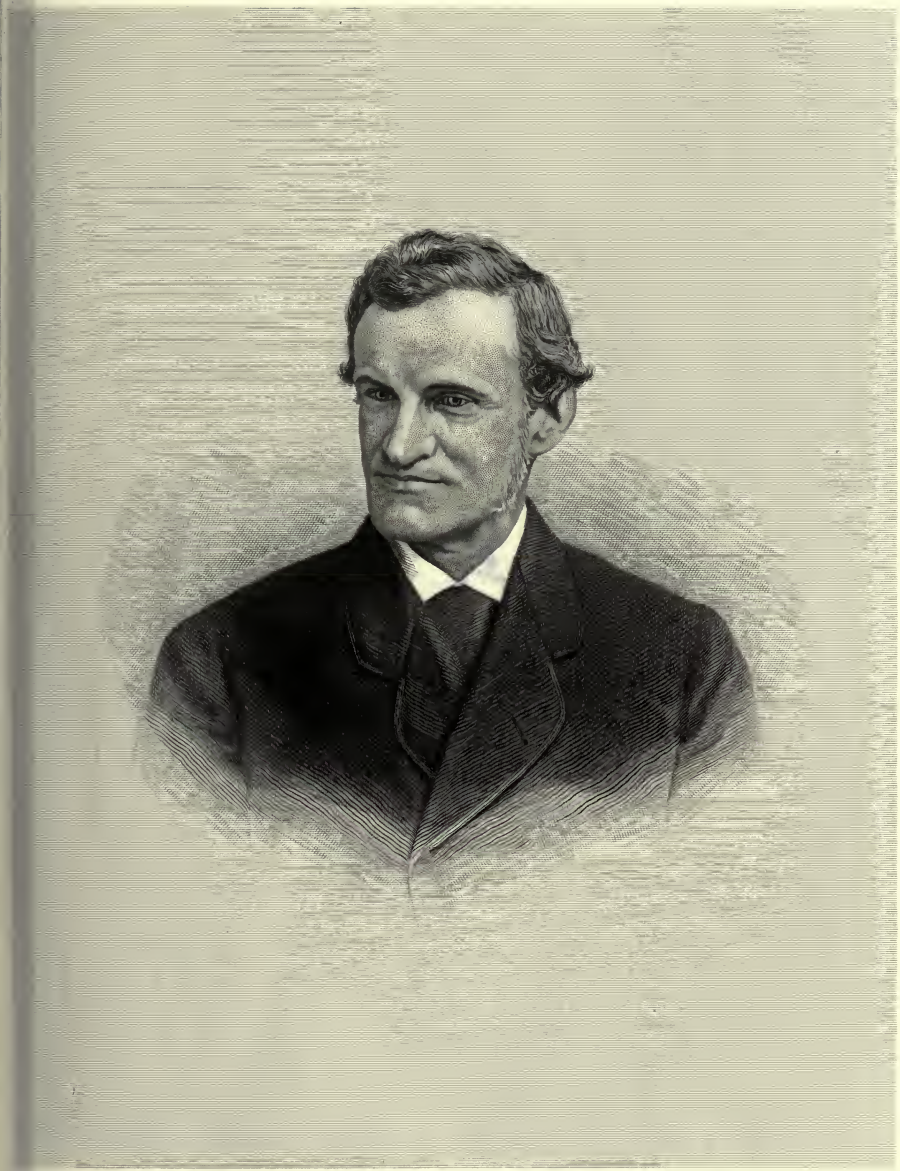
'Gainst monkey's claws and ass's hoof
My studies forge me mail of proof.
I climb through paths forever new
To purer air and broader view.
What matter though they should efface,
So far below, my footstep's trace?

TO MISS NORTON

Elmwood, July 2, 1872.

. . . We have had Commencement week, too, but I saw little of it, being hard at work all the while upon an article about Dante, with Miss Rossetti's book for a text. I have not made so much of it as I should if my time had been less broken. As it was, I had to keep the press going from day to day. Charles will smile at this, remembering his editorial experience of me. . . .

We sail in a week from to-day, and I have as yet no plans. J. H. goes with us! Frank Parkman and Henry Adams are also fellow-passengers, so that we shall have a pleasant ship's company. We shall contrive to meet you *somewhere*, you may be sure. Write to care of Barings whether you are still at St. Germain. I associate the name pleasantly with the old homonymous pear which used to be in our garden. . . .



Engraved for the Eclectic by J.J. Cade, New York.

FRANCIS PARKMAN.

$\frac{80}{2}$

VII

1872–1876

VISIT TO EUROPE: ENGLAND, RESIDENCE IN PARIS, ITALY, PARIS, ENGLAND.—HONORARY DEGREE FROM OXFORD.—ELEGY ON AGASSIZ.—RETURN TO ELMWOOD.—RESUMPTION OF PROFESSORIAL DUTIES.—CENTENNIAL POEMS AT CONCORD AND CAMBRIDGE.—"AMONG MY BOOKS," SECOND SERIES.—ENTRANCE INTO POLITICAL LIFE. — DELEGATE TO THE NATIONAL REPUBLICAN CONVENTION.—PRESIDENTIAL ELECTOR.

LETTERS TO MISS GRACE NORTON, GEORGE PUTNAM, MISS NORTON, THOMAS HUGHES, C. E. NORTON, LESLIE STEPHEN, E. L. GODKIN, T. B. ALDRICH, MRS. L. A. STIMSON, W. D. HOWELLS, T. S. PERRY, MRS. ——, J. W. FIELD, R. S. CHILTON, R. W. GILDER, JOEL BENTON, E. P. BLISS, H. W. LONGFELLOW.

TO MISS GRACE NORTON

11 Down Street, Piccadilly, Aug. 4, 1872.

. . . Our voyage was as smooth as the style of the late Mr. Samuel Rogers of happy memory. . . . We landed at Queenstown on the morning of the eleventh day out. . . .

Dublin interested me much. I can describe it in one word by calling it Hogarthian. I walked pretty well over it while there, and was continually struck with its last-century look. I saw even a genuine Tom O'Bed-

lam one day. Beggars are as thick as in Italy and quite as pertinacious. One pretty little scene I shall never forget. It was a drizzly day, and the sidewalks were covered with a slippery black paste. Near the Tholsel (City Hall) sat a woman on some steps nursing her baby, and in front of her a ring of barefoot children (the oldest not more than five years) were dancing round a little tot who stood bewildered in the middle, and singing as they whirled hand in hand. They were as dirty and as rosy and as ragged as could be, and as pretty as one of Richter's groups. The ballad-singer with her baby and lugubrious song I met several times. At the National Gallery we saw a portrait by Morone as good as anything south of the Alps, and at the National Exhibition lots of Irish portraits and other interesting things. I went to the library of Trinity College, where the librarian, Dr. Malet, was very civil, and promised to send some books to the good old Sibley.* I was interested in the College as being Godkin's, whom I celebrated to Dr. Malet, you may be sure. From Dublin to Chester, where we stayed five days, and where Charles Kingsley (who is a canon there) was very kind. We had the advantage of going over the Cathedral with him, and over the town with the chief local antiquary. We fell quite in love with it and with the delightful walk round the walls. We arrived in London night before last. . . .

Affectionately yours,

LLUMBAGO LLOWELL.

* The Librarian of Harvard University.



Engraved by C. H. Jeens from a Photograph

London Published by Macmillan & Co. 1876

82/2

TO MISS NORTON

11 Down Street, Piccadilly, Aug. 19, 1872.

. . . I do not mean to say that I am not enjoying myself. I suppose I *am*, in an indolent kind of fashion, but I caught myself being homesick before I had been a week in England. Some little solace I got out of an Anglo-Norman poem which I picked up here, and I can't help laughing when I think of it. So, then, my nature, like a dyer's hand, *has* been subdued to what it has been working in, and the curious dulness I am sensible of in myself is a fair standard of how much there must be in the literature whence I drew it. It worries me, though, this slowness. You have always laughed at me when I talked about it, but what I said of myself years ago (I could not say anything so smart now)—that I had been altered from percussion to flint—is perfectly true.

Something you say in your letter puts me in mind of what I always thought one of the most truly pathetic passages in all literature. I mean that in which Froissart, after devoting a chapter to the praises of the Queen (I forget her name) who had been his patroness, seems to bethink himself, and rousing from his reverie with a sigh, begins his next chapter by saying, "There is no death which we must not get over," or something to that effect. Whether he meant just that or not, there is nothing sadder, nothing we resent so much, as the necessity of being distracted and consoled. I fear I have quoted this to you before, it comes up to my mind so often. I wish I could recollect the Queen's name.

But I never can. And this the more persuades me of my unfitness to be a professor, whose main business it is to remember names and to be cocksure of dates. I can't for my life tell you (without going to my books) who it was that first alternated male and female rhymes in French alexandrine verse, nor whether he hit upon this clever scheme for setting the French Muse in the stocks towards the close of the twelfth or beginning of the thirteenth century. Isn't there a pretty professor! Anyhow, the said Muse has sat there ever since! Béranger cheered her up with a bottle of claret, and de Musset gave her a kind of wicked inspiration with *absinthe*; but there she sits, and all owing to this wretch whose name I can't recall. Am I the right sort of man to guide ingenuous youth? Not a bit of it! . . .

Tell Charles the article on Dante was written in all the distraction of getting away, with the thermometer at 95°, and keeping abreast of the printers, so that I could not arrange and revise properly. I am glad he found anything in it. . . .

Good-by, my dear woman, for a few days. By Jove, isn't it pleasant to be able to say that? For a *few days*, mind you. It was years, a month ago. . . .

Yours most everything always,

J. R. L.

TO C. E. NORTON

Hôtel de Lorraine, No. 7 Rue de Beaune,
Paris, Dec. 4, 1872.

. . . Oddly enough when I got your letter about



Beranger

Tennyson's poem I had just finished reading a *real* Arthurian romance—"Fergus"—not one of the best, certainly, but having that merit of being a genuine blossom for which no triumph of artifice can compensate; having, in short, that *woodsy* hint and tantalization of perfume which is so infinitely better than anything more defined. Emerson had left me Tennyson's book; so last night I took it to bed with me and finished it at a gulp—reading like a naughty boy till half-past one. The contrast between his pomp and my old rhymer's simpleness was very curious and even instructive. One bit of the latter (which I cannot recollect elsewhere) amused me a good deal as a Yankee. When Fergus comes to Arthur's court and Sir Kay "sarses" him (which, you know, is *de rigeur* in the old poems), Sir Gawain saunters up *whittling a stick* as a medicine against ennui. So afterwards, when Arthur is dreadfully bored by hearing no news of Fergus, he reclines at table without any taste for his dinner, and whittles to purge his heart of melancholy. I suppose a modern poet would not dare to come so near Nature as this lest she should fling up her heels. But I am not yet "aff wi' the auld love," nor quite "on with the new." There are very fine childish things in Tennyson's poem and fine manly things, too, as it seems to me, but I conceive the theory to be wrong. I have the same feeling (I am not wholly sure of its justice) that I have when I see these modern-mediæval pictures. I am defrauded; I do not see reality, but a masquerade. The costumes are all that is genuine, and the people inside them are shams—which, I take it, is just the reverse of what ought to be. One special

criticism I should make on Tennyson's new Idyls, and that is that the similes are so often dragged in by the hair. They seem to be taken (*à la* Tom Moore) from note-books, and not suggested by the quickened sense of association in the glow of composition. Sometimes it almost seems as if the verses were made for the similes, instead of being the cresting of a wave that heightens as it rolls. This is analogous to the costume objection and springs perhaps from the same cause — the making of poetry with malice prepense. However, I am not going to forget the lovely things that Tennyson has written, and I think they give him rather hard measure now. However, it is the natural recoil of a too rapid fame. Wordsworth had the true kind — an unpopularity that roused and stimulated while he was strong enough to despise it, and honor, obedience, troops of friends, when the grasshopper would have been a burthen to the drooping shoulders. Tennyson, to be sure, has been childishly petulant; but what have these whipper-snappers, who cry "Go up, baldhead," done that can be named with some things of his? He has been the greatest artist in words we have had since Gray — and remember how Gray holds his own with little fuel, but real fire. He had the secret of the inconsumable oil, and so, I fancy, has Tennyson.

I keep on picking up books here and there, but I shall be forced to stop, for I find I have got beyond my income. Still, I shall try gradually to make my Old French and Provençal collection tolerably complete, for the temptation is great where the field is definitely bounded. . . .

TO GEORGE PUTNAM

Hôtel de Lorraine, No. 7 Rue de Beaune,
Paris, Dec. 12, 1872.

My dear Putnam,— . . . We are still at the same little hotel, and like it better and better. It is really being in foreign parts, for everybody is French but ourselves, and we are become a part of the household, so that night before last in the gale it was our *haut de cheminée* that came rattling down.

We like the people very much. They are kindly and honest, and we think we shall stay a month or two longer. It will be wise, for if I stay so long my income will overtake me. It is a little out of breath just now—but then I have got some books (all in Old French and Provençal) which will be a revenue to me so long as I live. We are too near the quais, where all the *bouquinistes* spin their webs. We are threatened with a kind of mild revolution (an inoculated one), but I doubt. I think the Right must keep on with Thiers, and that even had they the courage for a *coup-d'état*, he would outgeneral them. But, after all, *en France tout arrive*, and the French are the most wonderful creatures for talking wisely and acting foolishly I ever saw. However, I like Paris, and am beginning to be glad I came abroad. . . .

TO C. E. NORTON

Paris, Jan. 11, 1873.

My dear Charles,— . . . I begin to foresee that I shall not stay abroad so long as I expected. I thought I was

all right now, but as usual my income is never so large as my auguries. Fortunately, I like Cambridge better than any other spot of the earth's surface, and if I can only manage to live there, shall be at ease yet. *Inveni portum, spes et fortuna, valete; sat me lusistis, ludite jam alios!* That's what I *shall* say—at least I hope so. . . .

Paris, old Mr. Sales said, was not exactly the place for deacons. Nor is it for poets. However, no place is where one only perches. I cannot contrive the right kind of solitude, and if I compose as I walk about I shall be run over. I made out a sonnet day before yesterday, which, as I composed it expressly for you, I shall send to its address—though its merit lies mainly in the sentiment and not (as it should be with a sonnet) in the execution. But I am getting as bad with my prelude as the band in a penny show, and you will begin to expect something wonderful if I don't give you the thing at once.

P. S. I conceived it in Cumberland.

As sinks the sun behind yon alien hills,
Whose heather-purpled slopes in glory rolled
Flush all my thought with momentary gold,
What pang of vague regret my fancy thrills?
Here 'tis enchanted ground the peasant tills,
Where the shy ballad could its leaves unfold,
And Memory's glamour makes new sights seem old,
As when our life some vanished dream fulfils.
Yet not to you belong these painless tears,
Land loved ere seen; before my darkened eyes,
From far beyond the waters and the years,
Horizons mute that wait their poet rise;
The stream before me fades and disappears,
And in the Charles the western splendor dies.

I have hardly expressed the strange feeling of ideal familiarity vexed with a longing for something visibly intimate. But I miss my *old* Solitude, and if Memory be the mother of the Muses, this lonely lady is their maiden aunt who always has gifts for them in her cupboard when they visit her. However, I have a poem or two in my head which I hope will come to something one of these days. The theme of one of them is pretty enough. To the cradle of Garin come the three fairies. One gives him beauty—one power—and the third misfortune. Grown an old, old man, he sits in the courtyard of the palace he has conquered from the Saracens, and muses over his past life to the murmur of the fountain, which sings to him as it did to its old lords, and as it will to the new after he is gone. As he reckons up what is left him as the result of the three gifts, what is really a possession of the soul, what has turned the soft fibre of gifts to the hard muscle of character, he comes to the conclusion that the third fairy, whom his parents would fain have kept away or propitiated, was the beneficent one.

I have seen nothing new except the Duc d'Aumale, whom I met the other night at the Laugels'. I had, of course, only a few moments' commonplace talk with him. As a general thing, I like men vastly better than dukes, though where the two qualities are united, as in him, I am willing to encounter the product. He is a *distingué* person in a high sense, with a real genius for looking like a gentleman. I was pleased to see how much might be done by *breeding*, and how effective the result is—greater in some respects than that of great

natural parts. It was good to see so pure a face in the grandson of Egalité and great-grandson of the Regent. There is hope, then, for the most degraded races, and Whitefriars may contain the ancestors of saints and heroes. One thing struck me particularly, and made our Americanism (which weighs a man honestly, without throwing in the bones of his ancestors) dearer to me. Nobody, I could see, was quite at ease with the duke, nor he with anybody. There was something unnatural in the relation, a dimly defined sense of anachronism, something of what a dog might feel in the company of a tame wolf. The more I see of the old world, the better I like the new. I am disgusted to see how the papers are willing to overlook the crimes and the essential littleness of Napoleon III., simply because he has had the wit to die, a stroke of genius within reach of us all. However, I was long ago convinced that one of the rarest things in the world was a real opinion based on judgment and unshakable by events. The *clamor civium prava laudantium* is as bad as that of the *jubentium*. . . .

Always most lovingly yours,

J. R. L.

TO MISS NORTON

Hôtel de Lorraine, 7 Rue de Beaune,
Paris, March 4, 1873.

. . . We have enjoyed our winter here on the whole very much, and have really learned something of the French and their ways—more than ten years on the other side of the river would have done for us. The

French are fearfully and wonderfully made in some respects, but I like them and their pretty ways. It is a positive pleasure (after home experiences, where one has to pad himself all over against the rude elbowing of life) to go and buy a cigar. It is an affair of the highest and most gracious diplomacy, and we spend more monsieurs and madames upon it than would supply all the traffic of Cambridge for a half-century. It is a good drill, for I have always been of the mind that in a democracy manners are the only effective weapons against the bowie-knife, the only thing that will save us from barbarism. Our little hotel is very pleasant in its way, and its clientèle is of the most respectable. . . . I can't remember whether I told Charles that one of our convives turned out to be a gentleman who had lived many years in Finland, and had translated into French my favorite "Kalewala." He tells me that the Finns recite their poems six or seven hours on the stretch, *spelling* one another, as we say in New England. This would make easily possible the recitation of a poem like the "Roland," for example, or of one even much longer. . . .

TO C. E. NORTON

Hôtel de Lorraine, 7 Rue de Beaune,
Paris, March 18, 1873.

. . . The Emersons are back with us, to our great satisfaction, and yesterday I took him to the top of the tower of Nôtre Dame, and played the part of Satan very well, I hope, showing him all the kingdoms of this world. A very pleasant walk we had of it. He grows

sweeter if possible as he grows older. He had a prosperous Egyptian journey. . . . He told us a droll story of Alcott last night. He asked the Brahmin what he had to show for himself, what he had *done*, in short, to justify his having been on the earth. "If Pythagoras came to Concord whom would he ask to see?" demanded the accused triumphantly. . . .

TO THOMAS HUGHES

Hôtel de Lorraine, 7 Rue de Beaune,
Paris, March 19, 1873.

My dear Friend,—First, of what interests me most. The day I got your book* the Emersons came back from the crocodiles and pyramids and fleas. So I could not get at it so soon as I would. But I began it in the hour before dinner, and at last, when everybody had gone to bed, I sat up (like a naughty boy) till half-past one and read every word of it, even including my own verses, which had a kind of sweetness for me because you liked them. It interested me very much, and I quite fell in love with your father, who seems to me to have been a model of good sense and that manliness which it is perhaps our weakness to limit by calling it gentle-manliness. I see where you got a great deal of what I love in you. I wish your brother had done more, and I confess (though it is awkward) that I would rather have had your life (but for a single tragic contingency) than his. I did, to be sure, get a part of it. But I was touched especially and inspired with the glimpse I got

* The book was "Memoir of a Brother."

of the affection and unity of your household. Your preface came to me just at the right moment, when I was saddened by the news from home, above all, with the fact that the average public opinion of the country did not seem to be higher than the personal sense of duty of its representatives. What you say of the quiet lives that would come to the front in England in a time of stress I believe to be true of us also. I cannot think such a character as Emerson's—one of the simplest and noblest I have ever known—a freak of chance, and I hope that my feeling that the country is growing worse is nothing more than men of my age have always felt when they looked back to the *tempus actum.* I think that this book of yours also, like all your others, will do a great deal of good and add to the number of honest men in the world. The longer I live (you will see or divine the subtle thread of association) the less I wonder that men make much of soldiers. The Romans were right when they lumped together manhood, courage, and virtue in the single word *virtus.* What profounder moral than that their descendants should express by the word *virtu* the contents of a shop where second-hand shreds and fragments of old housekeeping fashions are sold?

As for the degree, read Charles Lamb's sonnet on visiting Oxford and you will see how I feel. I would take a much longer journey for the sake of feeling even a son-in-law's right in that ancient household of scholarship and pluck. I believe I care very little for decorations, but I should prize this not only abstractedly, but because it would give more "power to my elbow," as Paddy

says, at home. How it would have pleased my father! But I shall not be a bit disappointed if I do not get it, and shall always count myself a D.C.L. so far as you are concerned.

We had a good laugh over the woodcut on the cover of my book. The one inside is a very good copy of the photograph, though it does not, I fancy, look much like me. Madame pronounces it dreadful. Luckily, I have the skin of a rhinoceros in this regard, and have never sloughed off the wholesome effect of having been brought up to consider myself visible to the naked eye, in other words plain. What a frank creature the sun is, to be sure, as an artist! He would almost take the nonsense out of a Frenchman.

If I had dreamed you would have run over to Paris, wouldn't I have told you where I was! But, in fact, I have lingered on here from week to week aimlessly, having come abroad to do nothing, and having thus far succeeded admirably.

So far as I understood your "differ"* with your electors I thought you were right. I doubt if it be time yet to give up the Church of England or indeed to cut rashly any cable that anchors you to your historical past. If I am wanted in England I will be with you at Easter.

Always affectionately yours,

J. R. L.

* My supporters at Frome, which borough I then represented, had passed resolutions in favor of disestablishing the Church and against co-operation, having been visited by the agents of the Liberation Society and the Trades' Protection Society, and I had refused to vote for disestablishment or for any measure limiting the right to associate for any lawful purpose.—T. H.

TO LESLIE STEPHEN

Paris, April 29, 1873.

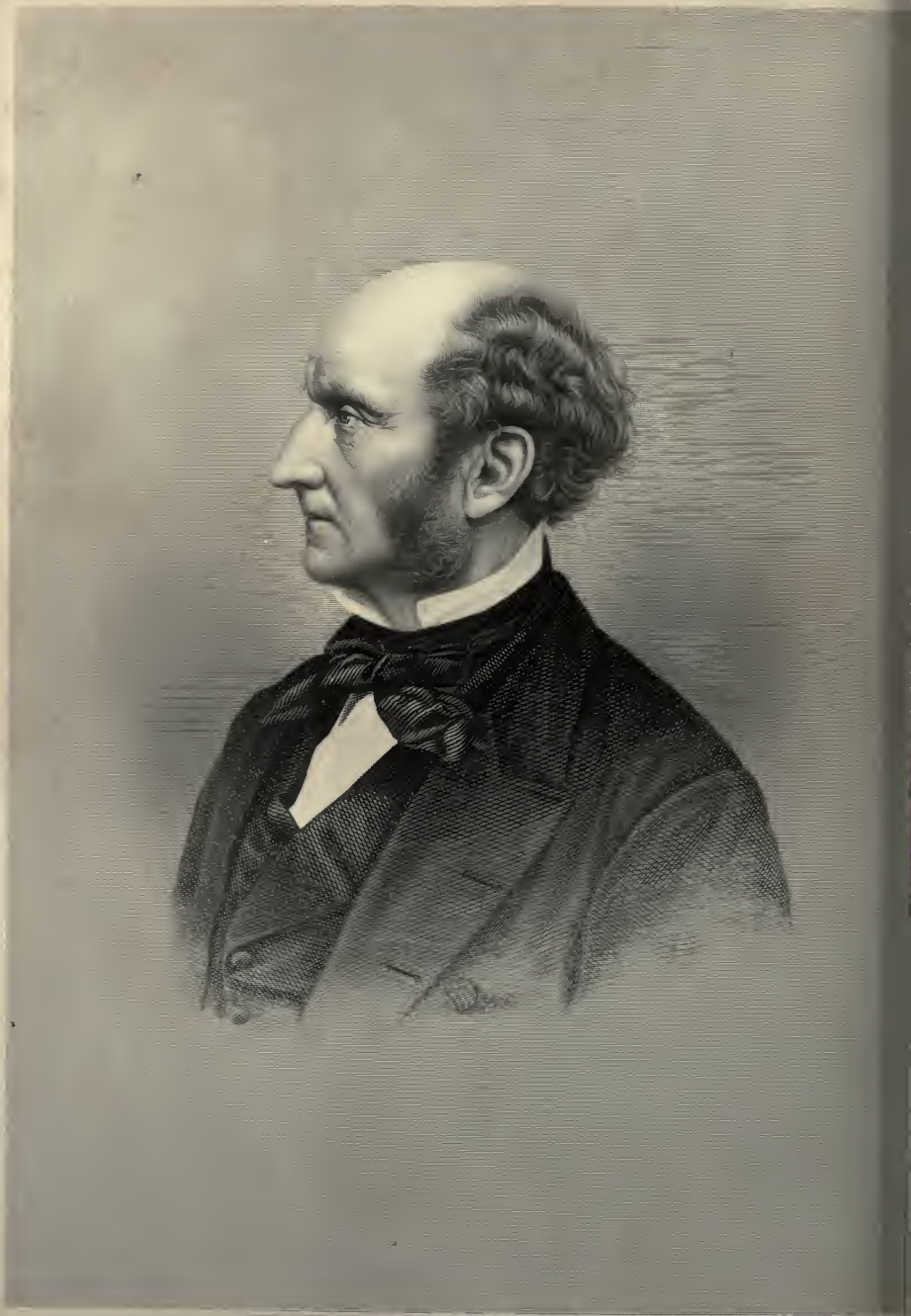
My dear Stephen,—Behold me now these six months, like Napoleon the First, buried here on the banks of the Seine, in the midst of that French people whom I love so well. I ought to have answered your kind letter long ago, but I have delayed from day to day till I could tell you something definite about my plans. But somehow or other I find it harder and harder to have any plans. Mine host has mixed nepenthe with his wine, or mandragora, that takes the reason prisoner. But I think I have made up my mind to run over to London for a day or two to bid the Nortons good-by, for I cannot bear to have the sea between us before I see them again. If I do, I shall arrive about the 7th of May, and I shall count on seeing you as much as possible. It will depend very much on whether I can find a good perch for Mrs. Lowell when I am gone, for she is not in condition just now for so long a journey, though not in any sense ill. As for me, I am grown more fat than bard beseems, but have had a continual bother with my eyes — now better, now worse, but on the whole staying worse. Three days ago I thought I was all right, and this morning my left eye is as bad as ever. A good reason this for going over to England, for you will always be to me as good a sight for sair een as anything I can think of. I have an eyeglass swinging at my neck like the albatross (indeed I am getting to be a tolerably ancient mariner by this time), but it is only a bother to me. So I have

to give up the old-age theory and drift in the ocean of conjecture.

However, with all drawbacks I have had a pleasant winter, and have at least pretty well shaken myself clear of one of my pet antipathies. I have even learnt to like the French after a fashion, but it is curious to me that I like and dislike them with nothing of the intensity which I feel towards Americans and English. I feel, always unconsciously, that they are a different breed, for whom I am in no way responsible. In the other case, a sense of common blood and partnership makes attraction easier and repulsion more instinctive. I watch these people as Mr. Darwin might his distant relations in a menagerie. Their tricks amuse me, and I am not altogether surprised when they remind me of "folks," as we say in New England. I don't believe they will make their *République* (a very different thing from a republic, by the way) march, for every one of them wants to squat on the upper bar and to snatch the nuts from his fellows. *Esprit* is their ruin, and an epigram has with them twice the force of an argument. However, I have learned to like them, which is a great comfort, and to see that they have some qualities we might borrow to advantage.

I have read your "Are We Christians?" and liked it, of course, because I found *you* in it, and that is something that will be dear to me so long as I keep my wits. I think I should say that you lump *shams* and *conventions* too solidly together in a common condemnation. All conventions are not shams by a good deal, and we

97
2



should soon be Papuans without them. But I dare say I have misunderstood you. I am curious to see your brother's book, which, from some extracts I have read, I think will suit me very well. What I saw was good old-fashioned sense, and would have tickled Dr. Johnson. I should find it hard to say why I dislike John Stuart Mill, but I have an instinct that he has done lots of harm.

I hope you have seen something of Emerson, who is as sweet and wholesome as an Indian-summer afternoon. We had nearly three weeks of him here, to my great satisfaction. . . .

I remain as always

Most heartily and affectionately yours,

J. R. L.

TO C. E. NORTON

Paris, May 1, 1873.

. . . I think I shall get some good out of it (my laziness) one of these days, for I am pleased to find that my dreams have recovered their tone and are getting as fanciful as they used to be before I was twenty-five. So I don't mind the circumference of my waist. The other night I heard a peasant girl in the ruins of a castle sing an old French ballad that would have been worth a thousand pound if I could have pieced it together again when I awoke. What bit I could recall satisfied me that it was not one of those tricks that sleep puts on us sometimes. I have seen the Delectable Mountains, too, several times to my great comfort, for I began to believe myself fairly stalled in the slough of middle age.

Montaigne called himself an old man at forty-seven, and I am fifty-four!

Our last expedition was down the Seine in the steamboat to Suresnes, which despite a leaden day was delightful. Spring is a never-failing medicine with me. Something or other within us pushes and revives with the season, and the first song of a bird sums up all the past happiness of life, all its past sorrow too, with a passion of regret that is sweeter than any happiness. The spring here is very lovely. The tender and translucent green of the leaves, their dream of summer, as it were, lasts longer than with us, where they become mere business arrangements for getting grub out of the blue air before they are out of their teens.

I look forward to having two or three real days with you. I haven't got the groove of the collar out of my neck yet, but I am a little freer in mind than when you were here. However, we shall see. I *think* I am not so dull as then.

J. H. came back to us day before yesterday, after a month in Italy, where he did not much enjoy himself. He says that he has become a thorough *misoscopist*, or hater of sights. He goes home in June, and I shall miss him more than I like to think. . . .

TO T. B. ALDRICH

Paris, May 28, 1873.

My dear Aldrich,—I have been so busy lately with doing nothing (which on the whole demands more time, patience, and attention than any other business) that I

have failed to answer your very pleasant letter of I don't know how long ago.

What you say about William amused me much.* You know there is a proverb that "service is no inheritance," but it was invented by the radical opposition—by some servant, that is, who was asking for higher wages. My relation with William realized the saying in an inverse sense, for I received him from my father, already partly formed by an easy master, and have, I think, pretty well finished his education. I believe I fled to Europe partly to escape his tyranny, and I am sure he is awaiting the return of his vassal to re-enter on all the feudal privileges which belong of right to his class in a country so admirably free as ours. He had all the more purchase upon me that his wife had been in our service before he was, so that he knew all my weak points beforehand. Nevertheless, he has been an excellent servant, diligent, sober, and systematic, and I have no doubt I shall end my days as his milch cow if the udders of my purse continue to have a drop in them. You would see his worst side. He has eyes all round his head for the main chance; but anybody would take advantage of *me*, and I prefer the shearer to whom I am wonted, who clips close, to be sure, but has skill enough to spare the skin. He saves me trouble, and that is a saving I would rather buy dear than any other. Beyond meat and drink, it is the only use I have ever discovered for money—unless you give it away, which is apt to breed enemies. You will for-

* Mr. Aldrich was occupying Elmwood during Lowell's absence. "William" was the old factotum of the place.

give my saying that I feel a certain grain of pleasure (with the safe moat of ocean between) in thinking of you in your unequal struggle with Wilhelmus Conquestor.

It gives me a very odd feeling to receive a letter dated at Elmwood from anybody whose name isn't Lowell. I used to have a strange fancy when I came home late at night that I might find my double seated in my chair, and how should I prove my identity? Your letter revived it. I can see my study so plainly as I sit here—but I find it hard to fill my chair with anybody but myself. By the way, the study table was made of some old mahogany ones that came from Portsmouth—only I gave it to be done by a man in want of work, and of course the cheap-looking affair which affronts your eyes. 'Twas too bad, for the wood was priceless. You may have dined at it in some former generation. It is a pleasant old house, isn't it? Doesn't elbow one, as it were. It will make a frightful conservative of you before you know it. It was born a Tory and will die so. Don't get too used to it. I often wish I had not grown into it so. I am not happy anywhere else.

I am glad to hear you are writing a novel. Get it all done before you begin to print. Serials have been the bane of literature. There is no more good shipbuilding. But I draw a good augury from your letter. You had the strength of mind to leave off at the end of your third page—though I would readily have forgiven you the fourth. This is a rare virtue, and if you will but write your book on the same principle of leav-



T. B. Aldrich.

ing off when you have done, I am sure I shall be glad to read it.

I shall stay out my two years, though personally I would rather be at home. In certain ways this side is more agreeable to my tastes than the other—but even the buttercups stare at me as a stranger and the birds have a foreign accent. I'll be hanged but the very clouds put on strange looks to thwart me, and turn the cold shoulder on me. However, I have learned to know and like the French during my nine months' stay among them.

I am sorry to hear they stole your fruit. It gave me a sensible pang, for the trees I have planted are part of myself, and I feel the furtive evulsion of every pear even at this distance. Get a dog. He will eat up all your chickens, keep you awake all moonlight nights, and root up all your flowers, but he will make you feel safe about your pears till they have been made booty of. Study the book of Job. It supplies one with admirable formulas of impatience, and in that way serves to reconcile one to his lot. To learn patience read the works of A. H. K. B.

Give my love to Howells when you see him, and tell him that as he is pretty busy he will easily find time to write to me. I suppose he is in his new house by this time. And Bartlett's house? I sha'n't know my Cambridge when I come back to it. Are you annexed yet? Before this reaches you I shall have been over to Oxford to get a D.C.L. So by the time you get it this will be the letter of a Doctor and entitled to the more respect. Perhaps, in order to get the full flavor, you

had better read this passage first if you happen to think of it. Do you not detect a certain flavor of parchment and Civil Law?

Mrs. Lowell joins me in kind regards to Mrs. Aldrich and yourself—and I am always

Yours cordially,

J. R. L.

P. S. I have kept this back for the Brest steamer, which saves me fourteen cents postage. We leave Paris in a day or two. I have learned to like it and the French, which is a great gain. We have had a very pleasant winter here in the most French of hotels. But Cambridge is better, as the rivers of Damascus were better than Jordan. There is no place like it, no, not even for taxes! I am getting gray and fat—about ½ as large as Howells.

TO THOMAS HUGHES

Paris, June 2, 1873.

My dear Friend,—If I am not wise enough for a Doctorate, the fault will be yours. The cap is about to fall on my head, and you are chiefly to be thanked for it. I am as pleased as Punch at the thought of having a kind of denizenship, if nothing more, at Oxford; for though the two countries insist on misunderstanding each other, I can't conceive why the sensible men on both sides shouldn't in time bring 'em to see the madness of their ways. Born on the edge of a University town, I have a proper respect for academical decorations, and I am provoked that I must wait till 1875 before I see myself

103
2



HENRI D'ORLÉANS,

DUC D'AUMALE.

in our triennial catalogue with "D.C.L. Oxon." at my tail. If I don't know much Roman law, I shall at least endeavor to do credit to my new title by being as civil as an orange to all mankind. Mr. Bernard has been good enough to invite me to stay with him during my visit to Oxford, so I am sure to be in good hands. I do not know whether you old Oxonians attend the University festivals or not, but I shall not feel properly Doctored unless you are to the fore. My visit will be a flying one at best, for I shall leave Mrs. Lowell at Bruges.

My last trip to England did me good. My eyes—whether it was the friends I saw or no I can't say—have been better ever since. England looked so lovely after France, though I can't yet quite make out why. But the land of the Gauls has the advantage that one can live on his income there.

We have had a revolution since I saw you—not so much of a one as your papers in England seem to think, however. The conservatives never had any intention of making a president of the Duc d'Aumale, and though I never make prophecies, yet I am sure their present intention (as it is their only good policy) is to keep things steady as they are. But you remember how the great Julius begins—"Omnis divisa est Gallia in partes tres." That is, into three parties—monarchists, Bonapartists, and republicans, who have to pull together for their own ends, and therefore, whether they will or no, must help the conservative republic. Henri V. is out of the question, and the radical republic equally so — I mean, as a thing that could endure. Meanwhile the legitimists are a drag on the Orleanists, and whatever Bo-

napartism there is among the masses means merely a longing for order and peace. Whatever government can secure these for a year or two will become the residuary legatee of the Empire.

I think it was the egotism of Thiers that overset him rather than any policy he was supposed to have, and I look on the peacefulness of the late change as a most hopeful augury for France. I believe in the bewildering force of names, but I believe also that things carry it in the long run. The French are a frugal, sensible, industrious, and conservative people, and if they can only keep the beggar prince out of the saddle, they won't be ridden to the devil so easily in future.

We shall leave Paris to-morrow or next day, stopping in Rheims to see the churches, at Louvain for the Town House, and so on to Antwerp, Ghent, and Bruges. If you write, address me "poste restante" at the last named.

I promised your little girl, when I was in London, to send her an autograph from Paris, so I have scribbled her a few nonsense-verses which I hope will serve her turn. If I don't see you in Oxford, I shall stop long enough in London to get a glimpse of you. Our plan is to go to Switzerland and Germany, and so down to Italy for the winter. Then back to Paris, and so over to England on our way home next year. I hate travelling with my whole soul, though I like well enough to "be" in places.

With kindest regards to Mrs. Hughes, I remain always

Affectionately yours,

J. R. L.

TO MRS. LEWIS A. STIMSON

Bruges, June 25, 1873.

My dear Mrs. Stimson, — Here are the poor little verses I wrote the night before we left Paris and promised to send you. They have been rattling about in Mrs. Lowell's portfolio ever since, but I cannot see that they are at all the wiser for their travels. This is the first chance I have had to copy them out for you.

"You may break, you may shatter the vase if you will,
The scent of the roses will hang round it still."

Lucretius first, as I suppose,
Ventured to fasten on the nose
A simile both rich and rare,
As savages hang jewels there;
Perhaps *he* stole it from some Greek
Whose poem lost 'twere vain to seek;
Perhaps he found it (if it ~~were~~ *was* his)
By simply following his proboscis;
At any rate 'tis no wise dim
That Tom Moore borrowed it of him,
And thinned it to the filagree
Which at my verses' top you see.

Some other poet 'twas, no doubt,
Who found a further secret out—
I mean, those intimate relations
'Twixt perfumes and associations;
Nay, 'twixt a smell of any kind
And the recesses of the mind,
Since Memory is reached by *no* door
So quickly as by that of odor.

Now, what do all these steps lead up to?
Why not speak frankly *ex abrupto?*
They lead to this—that when I'm gone,
And you sit trying fancies on,
Puzzling your brain with buts and maybes
About the future of your babies,
Planning some bow (Oh, sure, no harm)
To give your looks a heightened charm—
Sudden you'll give a little sniff
And say: "It surely seems as if
There was an odor in the room
Not just like mignonette in bloom,
Nor like the breeze that brings away
Sweet messages of new-mown hay:—
What? No! Why, yes, it is indeed
Stale traces of that hateful weed
The red man to his spoilers left,
Fatal as Nessus' burning weft."
And then with eyes still fixed in vision,
Unconscious of the least transition,
"I wonder what the ~~Lowells~~ Lowles are doing,
What bit of scenery pursuing.
Do they in Switzerland repent?
Or, o'er their guardian Murrays bent,
Do they endeavor to divine
Why they must needs enjoy the Rhine?
Count they the shocks the German kitchen
Is so incomparably rich in?
Do they across Lugano steer
In whose ethereal silence clear
It seems that one might hear a fin stir?
Or, in some grim and chilly minster,
Are they condemned to dog the Suisse
Through nasal rounds of that and this,
Till, to the very marrow chilled,
They wish men had not learned to build?

Or, bored with Tintorets and Titians
And saints in all the queer positions
They can be twisted to with paints,
Do they wish wicked things of saints?
Well, *she* was pleasant as could be,
So sweet and cheerful too—but *he!*
He left behind at every visit
Tobacco perfumes so explicit,
That in the night I often woke
Thinking myself about to choke.
I wish I had his pipe to throw it
Into the fire—a pretty poet!
Whene'er he's buried, those that love him,
Instead of violets sweet above him,
Should plant, to soothe his melancholy,
The poisonous herb brought home by Raleigh!"

Now, when such vixenish thoughts assail you,
And other lenitives all fail you,
Do like the children, who are wiser
And happier far than king or kaiser:
Play that a thing is thus or so,
And gradually you'll find it grow
The very truth (for bale or bliss)
Of what you fancy that it is;
Just call the weed, to try the spell,
Nepenthe, lotus, asphodel,
And say my pipe was such as those
The slim Arcadian shepherd blows
On old sarcophagi to lull
An ear these twenty centuries dull—
Pipe of such sweet and potent tone
It charmed to shapes of deathless stone
The piper and the dancers too
(As may mine never do for you,

But keep you rather fresh and fair
To breathe the sweetest mortal air).
Then, when your thought has worked its will,
And turned to sweetness things of ill,
Muse o'er your girlish smile and say,
"Well, now he's fairly gone away,
If on his faults one does not dwell,
There are worse bores than J. R. L."

There's an autograph for you! As long as one of Bach's fugues. Remember us to M. Garrier and Madame and Clarisse. Tell Baptiste (if he has not already boned it) that an old coat I left on a chair in my bedroom was meant for him. I have been over to Oxford to be doctored, and had a very pleasant time of it. You would respect me if you could have seen me in my scarlet gown. Kindest regards from both of us to both of you. We go from here in a day or two to Holland — then up the Rhine to Switzerland, where we join the Stephens and Miss Thackeray.

You must pardon the verses—my hand is out. The writing looks *something* like mine—not much.

Good-by; give an orange to each of the children for me, and believe me yours affectionately always,

J. R. L.

TO C. E. NORTON

Venice, Oct. 30, 1873.

. . . We made a pretty good *giro* in the Low Countries, going wherever there was a good Cathedral or Town Hall. Ypres charmed us especially, even after Bruges, which is always a Capua for me. The little town is so quiet and sleepy—no, not sleepy, but drowsy


109
2



Jean Froiſard Hiſtorian

London, Pub. by J. Thane, Spur Street Leiceſter Square

Froissart

and dreamy, and the walk round the ramparts looking out over endless green and down upon the tranquil moat, with its swans as still as the water-lilies whose whiteness they tarnished, that I felt sure I was an enchanted prince till I paid my bill at the inn. But for that I should assuredly have stumbled upon the Sleeping Beauty before long. But, alas and alas, the only kiss that awakens towns that have dropt asleep nowadays is that of Dame Trade, who makes bond-slaves of all she brings back to life. We passed by where Charlemagne (with Mr. Freeman's pardon) is said to have been born, and by a little town that gave me a pleasanter thrill—the birthplace of Dan Froissart. It lay about half a mile away, cuddled among trees, with its great hulk of a church looming up above the houses like a hen among her brood. I did not choose to see it nearer—it would have betrayed itself. As it was, I must have seen it very much as it looked to the dear old canon himself, when he used to play at all those incomprehensible games of which he gives us an inventory in his verses. . . .

I am more impressed by Tintoretto than ever before —his force, his freedom, and his originality. I never fairly *saw* the San Rocco pictures before—for one must choose the brightest days for them. The "Annunciation" especially has taken me by assault. That flight of baby angels caught up and whirled along in the wake of Gabriel like a skurry of autumn birds is to me something incomparable. And then the Cimas and the Bellinis and the Carpaccios! I think I am really happy here for the first time since I came abroad. . . .

I am looking forward now with compressed eagerness to our coming home. I shall not overstay my two years by a single day if I can help it. . . . For myself I see no result as yet but rest—which, to be sure, is a good thing—but I suppose when I get back I shall find I have learned something. But habit is so strong in me that I cannot work outside the reach of my wonted surroundings. . . .

TO THOMAS HUGHES

Venice, Thanksgiving Day, 1873.

My dear Friend,—As you are one of the good things I have to be thankful for in this life, I naturally think of you to-day, when I am far from the roast turkeys and plum-puddings of Elmwood. It makes me a little sad to think that, if I were at home, this would have been the first of these festivals that I should have celebrated in the true patriarchal way with a grandson at my board. It is a queer sensation when one begins to put out these feelers towards the future that are to keep us alive in a certain sense (perhaps to repeat us) after we are gone. It is a melancholy kind of meditation this, but travelling is melancholy — a constant succession of partings like life. To-day some very agreeable Portuguese leave us whose acquaintance we made here, the Viscount de Soveral, his wife, and daughter. They have lived much in England, and he, I suspect, must have been either ambassador or attached to the Portuguese embassy there. To-morrow two English ladies, whom I had just learned to like very much, go off to Cairo. It is just like a constant succession of funerals

—only people are buried in distance instead of in earth. Nay, since the earth is round, they will be covered from us by that also as in the grave.

The truth is, my dear friend, I have just been trying to make up my accounts, and as I don't very well know how, I have got dumpy before them—for the mysterious is always rather a damper for the spirits. Moreover, I am bored. I can't "do" anything over here except study a little now and then, and I long to get back to my reeky old den at Elmwood. Then I hope to find I have learned something in my two years abroad. . . .

We have been through Switzerland, where I climbed some of the highest peaks with a spy-glass—a method I find very agreeable, and which spares honest sole-leathers. I am thinking of getting up an achromatic-telescope Alpine Club, to which none will be admitted till they have had two fits of gout, authenticated by a doctor's bill.

So far I wrote yesterday. To-day the weather is triumphant, and my views of life consequently more cheerful. It is so warm that we are going out presently in the gondola, to take up a few dropped stitches. Venice, after all, is incomparable, and during this visit I have penetrated its little slits of streets in every direction on foot. The canals only give one a visiting acquaintance. The *calli* make you an intimate of the household. I have found no books except two or three in the Venetian dialect. I am looking forward to home now, and shouldn't wonder if I took up my work at Harvard again, as they wish me to do.

We leave Venice probably to-morrow for Verona. Thence to Florence, Rome, and Naples. . . .

TO MISS NORTON

Florence, Jan. 7, 1874.

. . . You find our beloved country dull, it seems. With a library like that at Shady Hill all lands are next door and all nations within visiting distance—better still, all ages are contemporary with us. But I understand your feeling, I think. Women need social stimulus more than we. They contribute to it more, and their magnetism, unless drawn off by the natural conductors, turns inward and irritates. Well, when I come back I shall be a good knob on which to vent some of your superfluous electricity; though on second thoughts I am not so sure of that, for the Leyden jar after a while becomes clever enough to give off sparks in return. But, dear Jane, the world in general is loutish and dull. I am more and more struck with it, and a certain sprightliness of brain, with which I came into life, is driven in on myself by continual rebuffs of misapprehension. I have grown wary and don't dare to let myself go, and what are we good for if our natural temperament doesn't now and then take the bit between its teeth and scamper till our hair whistles in the wind? But indeed America is too busy, too troubled about many things, and Martha is only good to make puddings. There is no *leisure*, and that is the only climate in which society is indigenous, the only one in which good-humor and wit and all the growths of art are more than half-hardy exotics. It is not that one needs to be

idle—but only to have this southern atmosphere about him. Democracies lie, perhaps, too far north. You were made—with your breadth of sympathy, the contagion of your temperament, and the social *go* of your mind—to drive the four-in-hand of a *salon*, and American life boxes us all up in a one-horse *sulky* of absorbing occupation. We are isolated in our own despite, the people who have a common ground of sympathy in pursuits (or the want of them) are rare, and without partnership the highest forms of culture are impossible. . . .

TO MISS GRACE NORTON

Florence, Jan. 27, 1874.

. . . We have been living very quietly here in Florence, which I find very beautiful in spite of the threnody Charles once wrote me about the loss of the walls. I hate changes in my familiar earth—they give me a feeling as if I myself had been transplanted and my roots unpleasantly disturbed; but I was not intimate enough with Florence to be discomforted, and the older parts of the town, which I chiefly haunt, have a noble mediæval distance and reserve for me—a frown I was going to call it, not of hostility, but of haughty doubt. These grim palace fronts meet you with an aristocratic stare that puts you to the proof of your credentials. There is to me something wholesome in it that makes you feel your place. As for pictures, I am tired to death of 'em, and never could enjoy them much when I had to run them down. And then most of them are so bad. I like best the earlier ones, that say so much in their half-uncon-

scious prattle, and talk nature to me instead of high art —spell the last two words with capitals, if you please. You see that they honestly mean to say something outside of themselves, and not to make you think about themselves. Children talk so, whose want of language often gives a pungency to their speech which the dictionary cannot give, but, alas, can take away. There is an instructive difference between the simple honesty of the earlier painters' portraits of themselves and the conscious attitudinizing of the later ones, which expresses what I mean. But the truth is, as Northcote says the choristers used to sing at St. Paul's, "I'm tired and want to go home"! . . .

TO C. E. NORTON

Albergo del Norte, Firenze,
Feb. 2, 1874.

My dear Boy,— . . . I don't feel like going on with a poem I am writing about Agassiz, whom I understood and liked better as I grew older (perhaps less provincial), and whom I shall miss as if some familiar hill should be gone out of my horizon when I come home and walk down the river-side to the village, as we used to call it; so I am going to answer your letter, which came yesterday. . . . I never was good for much as a professor—once a week, perhaps, at the best, when I could manage to get into some conceit of myself, and so could put a little of my *go* into the boys. The rest of the time my desk was as good as I. And then, on the other hand, my being a professor wasn't good for me—it damped my gunpowder, as it were, and my mind, when it took fire at all (which

wasn't often), drawled off in an unwilling fuse instead of leaping to meet the first spark. Since I have discharged my soul of it and see the callus on my ankle, where the ball and chain used to be, subsiding gradually to smooth and natural skin, I feel like dancing round the table as I used when I was twenty, to let off the animal spirits. If I were a profane man, I should say, "Darn the College!" . . .

TO THE SAME

Palazzo Barberini, Rome,
Feb. 26, 1874.

. . . I sent you the other day from Florence a long poem (*too* long, I fear), in the nature of an elegy on Agassiz. His death came home to me in a singular way, growing into my consciousness from day to day as if it were a graft new-set, that by degrees became part of my own wood and drew a greater share of my sap than belonged to it, as grafts sometimes will. I suppose that, unconsciously to myself, a great part of the ferment it produced in me was owing to the deaths of my sister Anna,* of Mrs. ——, whom I knew as a child in my early manhood, and of my cousin Amory, who was inextricably bound up with the primal associations of my life, associations which always have a singular sweetness for me. A very deep chord had been touched also at Florence by the sight of our old lodgings in the Casa Guidi, of the balcony Mabel used to run on, and the windows we used to look out at so long ago. I got sometimes into the mood I used to be in when I was always repeating to myself,

* Mrs. Charles R. Lowell.

"King Pandion he is dead;
All *thy* friends are lapt in lead"—

verses which seem to me desolately pathetic. At last I began to hum over bits of my poem in my head till it took complete possession of me and worked me up to a delicious state of excitement, all the more delicious as my brain (or at any rate the musical part of it) had been lying dormant so long. I couldn't sleep, and when I walked out I saw nothing outward. My old trick of seeing things with my eyes shut after I had gone to bed (I mean whimsical things utterly alien to the train of my thoughts—for example, a hospital ward with a long row of white, untenanted beds, and on the farthest a pile of those little wooden dolls with red-painted slippers) revived in full force. Nervous, horribly nervous, but happy for the first time (I mean consciously happy) since I came over here. And so by degrees my poem worked itself out. The parts came to me as I came awake, and I wrote them down in the morning. I had all my bricks—but the mortar wouldn't *set*, as the masons say. However, I got it into order at last. You will see there is a logical sequence if you look sharp. It was curious to me after it was done to see how fleshly it was. This impression of Agassiz had wormed itself into my consciousness, and without my knowing it had colored my whole poem. I could not help feeling how, if I had been writing of Emerson, for example, I should have been quite otherwise ideal. But there it is, and you can judge for yourself. I think there is some go in it somehow, but it is too near me yet to be judged fairly by me. It is old-fashioned, you see, but none the worse for that. . . .

TO MISS NORTON

Albergo Crocolle, Napoli,
Marzo 12, 1874.

My dear Jane,—If I should offer to explain any eccentricities of chirography by telling you my fingers were numb, you would think me joking, and be much rather inclined to account for it by the intoxication of this heavenliest of climates as you remember it. But I speak forth the words of truth and soberness when I assure you that Vesuvius is hoary with snow to his very roots, that Sorrento has just been hidden by a cloud which I doubt not is bursting in hail, for we were greeted on our arrival last night by a hailstone chorus of the most emphatic kind, so that the streets were white with it as we drove shiveringly along, and the top of the 'bus rattled to the old tune of "Pease on a Trencher." All the way from Rome I saw Virgil's too-fortunate husbandmen (he was right in his parenthetic *sua si bona norint*) working with their great blue cloaks on, or crouching under hedges from the wire-edged wind. The very teeth in their harrows must have been chattering for cold. And this is the climate you so rapturously wish us joy of! *Vedi Napoli, e poi morì* of a catarrh. I envy you with your foot of honest snow on the ground where it ought to be, and not indigested in the atmosphere, giving it a chill beyond that of condensed Unitarianism.

We left Rome after a fortnight's visit to the Storys, which was very pleasant *quoad* the old friends, but rather wild and whirling *quoad* the new. Two receptions a week, one in the afternoon and one in the evening,

were rather confusing for wits so eremetical as mine. I am not equal to the *grande monde*. 'Tis very well of its kind, I dare say, but it is not *my* kind, and I still think the company I kept at home better than any I have seen—especially better in its simplicity. The Old World carries too much top-hamper for an old salt like me to be easy in his hammock. There are good things west of the ocean in spite of —— 's pessimism, and better things to come, let us hope. . . .

I had a great pleasure at Rome in seeing William's new statue of Alcestis, which I think is *di gran lungo* ahead of anything he has done. It is very simple and noble. She is walking as if in a dream. The right hand gathers the mantle about her head. The left hangs loosely at her side. The face has a lovely expression of awakening and half-bewildered expectation. The drapery is admirably graceful, and the gliding motion of the figure (seen from whichever point of view) gives a unity of intention and feeling to the whole figure which I call masterly. I know no satisfaction more profound than that we feel in the success of an old friend, in the real success of anybody, for the matter of that. It was so pleasant to be able to say frankly, "You have done something really fine, and which everybody will like." I wonder whether I shall ever give that pleasure to anybody. Never mind, it is next best to feel it about the work of another, and I never do care very long for anything I have done myself. But, as one gets older, one can't help feeling sad sometimes to think how little one has achieved.

It is now (as regards my date) to-morrow the 13th.

We have been twice to the incomparable Museum, which to me is the most interesting in the world. There is the keyhole through which we barbarians can peep into a Greek interior—provincial Greek, Roman Greek, if you will, but still Greek. Vesuvius should be sainted for this miracle of his — hiding Pompeii and Herculaneum under his gray mantle so long, and saving them from those dreadful melters and smashers, the Dark Ages. Now we come in on them with the smell of wine still in their cups—we catch them boiling their eggs, selling their figs, and scribbling naughty things on the walls. I do not find that they were much our betters in parietal wit, but in sense of form how they dwarf us! They contrived to make commonplace graceful—or rather they could not help it. Well, we are alive (after a fashion) and they dead. That is one advantage we have over 'em. And they could not look forward to going home to Cambridge and to pleasant visits at Shady Hill. On the whole, I pity 'em. They are welcome to their poor little bronzes and things. Haven't we our newspapers, marry come up! What did they know about the Duke of Edinburgh's wedding and all the other edifying things that make us wise and great, I should like to know? They were poor devils, after all, and I trample on 'em and snub 'em to my heart's content. Where were their Common Schools? They are dumb and cast down their eyes, every mother's son of 'em. Not a school-desk among all their relics! No wonder they came to grief.

It is now after dinner. I write this by installments, as the amiable bandits of this neighborhood send a man

they have caught home to his friends till they pay a ransom—first one ear, then the other, and so on. I am a little cross with the table-d'hôte, because I always know so well what is coming—it is like the signs of the zodiac. I think we should be bored to death with the regular courses of the seasons were it not for the whimsicality of the weather. That saves us from suicide. On the other hand, though depressed by the inevitable *rosbif* and *pollo arrostito*, I am enlivened by a fiddle and guitar, and a voice singing the Naples of twenty years ago under my window. For Naples has changed for the worse (shade of Stuart Mill! I mean for the better) more than any other Italian city. Fancy, there are no more lazzaroni, there is no more *corricolo*. The mountains are here, and Capri, but where is Naples? *Italia unita* will be all very well one of these days, I doubt not. At present it is paper money, and the practical instead of the picturesque. Is the day of railways worse than that of Judgment? Why could not one country be taken and the other left? Let them try all their new acids of universal suffrage and what not on the tough body of the New World. The skin will heal again. But this lovely, disburied figure of Ausonia—they corrode her marble surface beyond all cure. *Panem et circenses* wasn't so bad after all. A bellyful and amusement—isn't that more than the average mortal is apt to get? more than perhaps he is capable of getting? America gives the *panem*, but do you find it particularly amusing just now? My dear Jane, you see I have had a birthday since I wrote last, and these are the sentiments of a gentleman of fifty-five—and after

dinner. Change in itself becomes hateful to us as we grow older, and naturally enough, because every change in ourselves is for the worse. I am writing to you, for example, by lamp-light, and I feel what used to be a pleasure almost a sin. To-morrow morning I shall see that the crows have been drinking at my eyes. Fanny is wiser (as women always are), and is sound asleep in her arm-chair on the other side of the fire. The wood here, by the way, is poplar—good for the inn-keeper, but only cheering for the guest, as it reminds him of the Horatian *large super foco ligna reponens*, and the old fellow in Smollett, whom you never read. . . .

TO C. E. NORTON

Hôtel de Lorraine, 7 Rue de Beaune,
Paris, May 11, 1874.

. . . Hearty thanks for all the trouble you have taken about my poor old poem. I had quite got over the first flush by the time I saw it in print, and now it seems weary, stale, flat, and unprofitable enough, God knows! Well, I confess I thought it better till I saw it. . . .

TO W. D. HOWELLS

Paris, May 13, 1874.

My dear Howells,—I was very glad to get a line from you. I should have sent my poem directly to you (for it tickled me that our positions should be reversed, and that you should be sitting in the seat of the scorner where I used to sit); but I happened to see a number of the *Atlantic* in Florence, and in the list of contribu-

tors my name was left out. As the magazine had just changed hands I did not know but it had changed minds as well, so I would not put you in a position where your friendship might come in conflict with some whimsey of your publishers. Thank you heartily for the pleasant things you say about the poem. I thought it very well just after parturition, and explained any motives of aversion I might feel by that uncomfortable redness which is common to newly born babes. But since I have it in print I have not been able to read it through—but only to dip in here and there on passages which C. E. N. had doubts about. What a witch is this Imagination, who sings as she weaves till we seem to *see* the music in the growing web, and when all is done that magic has vanished and the poor thing looks cheap as printed muslin! Well, I am pleased, all the same, with what you say, because, after all, you needn't have said it unless you liked.

Why, of course I went to see young Mead—am I not very fond of his sister and her husband? I should have gone again, but that poem got hold of me and squeezed all my life out for the time and a good bit after.

Now a word of business. I wrote C. E. N. day before yesterday, and of course forgot what I wished to say—or a part of it. If Osgood still wishes to reprint the Agassiz, pray make these further corrections—

"And scanned the festering *heap* we all despise."

I left out the word in copying. Instead of the "paler primrose of a second spring," read "Like those pale blossoms," etc., as I wrote at first. Why I changed it I

can't guess, for it makes an absurdity. I suppose I was misled by the alliteration. The verse is a better one as printed, but I couldn't have looked at the context. I mean those blossoms that come on fruit-trees sometimes in September. I have seen them once or twice in my own garden.

We have taken our passage for the 24th June, and shall arrive, if all go well, in time for the "glorious Fourth." I hope we shall find you in Cambridge. I long to get back, and yet am just beginning to get wonted (as they say of babies and new cows) over here. The delightful little inn where I am lodged is almost like home to me, and the people are as nice as can be.

Tell Mrs. Howells—with my kindest regards and Mrs. Lowell's too—that we are just going out shopping. The weather is infamous. Love to Winny and Boy, alias Booah.

Always affectionately yours,

J. R. L.

TO THOMAS HUGHES

Hôtel de Lorraine, 7 Rue de Beaune,
Paris, May 16, 1874.

My dear Friend,—Here we are back again in our old quarters, though not so soon by several weeks as I expected. But how get away from Rome, even though it be changed much for the worse so far as its outside is concerned? It is a providential arrangement that after fifty one hates improvement; it is the drag that hinders things from going too fast. In this respect Paris is comforting, for I find the French exactly where I left 'em a year ago, only more so.

In your revolution I took a personal interest, as I need not tell you. I happened to be where I saw the English papers at the time, and though I was disgusted that you should not have been returned, I was entirely pleased with the way in which you lost your election. It was like you, for it was honorable and magnanimous, and therefore a higher kind of success than winning the seat would have been. But men like you are wanted in Parliament, and so I feel sure that I shall have to write M. P. after your name again before long. Last year you said something about running over to Paris for a week. It would be very jolly if you would come, now that you have no Parliamentary duties to detain you.

I can't tell you how glad I am to be on my way home. I hope after I get there I shall find I have got something by my travels better than a grayer beard and the torments of what the doctors call "suppressed gout." It is suppressed after the fashion of the Commune, which has jumped from the Parisian great toe into every nerve and muscle of the body. . . .

TO LESLIE STEPHEN

Hôtel de Lorraine, 7 Rue de Beaune,
Paris, May 16, 1874.

Dear Stephen,—We have got thus far on our way home, and hope to arrive in England about the first of next month. I was on the point of writing you again from Florence when I was suddenly snatched up by a poem which occupied me wholly for some time, and left me, like a bit of rock-weed at low water, dangling helpless and waiting for the next tide.

I read your book* with great interest and, in the main, with great satisfaction, and gave it to Harry James, who liked it altogether. My only objection to any part of your book is, that I think our beliefs more a matter of choice (natural selection, perhaps, but anyhow not logical) than you would admit, and that I find no fault with a judicious shutting of the eyes. You would have shut yours tight before you finally let go at the end of your bad five minutes—and yet I fancy the descent would have been both interesting scientifically and morally picturesque. . . .

When I was with the Storys in Rome, I took down one day while waiting for my breakfast a volume of the *Living Age*, made up of articles from the English journals. I hit upon one entitled "In a Library," and liked it so much that I carried it to my room and read all the rest of the series I could find with equal interest. There were some more than odd coincidences with my own experience. You can fancy how tickled I was when I found I had been reading you all the while. I actually damaged my eyes over them — reading on after candle-light and when I ought to have been abed. There, you see, is perfectly disinterested testimony. The pills had no label. I tried one and then swallowed the box because they did me good.

I half feel at home now that I am back again in my little inn, with its household as simple and honest as if it were in Arcadia. It amuses me (I know it ought to sadden me, but I can't help it) to find the French in

* This book was "Essays on Free Thinking and Plain Speaking."

the same *cul-de-sac* where I left them a year ago, and saying helplessly, *C'est une crise très sérieuse, mais que voulez-vous? Nous sommes Français—voilà tout!* And yet the same Frenchmen have managed their finances in a way that ought to make *us* blush to the roots of our hair. . . .

TO GEORGE PUTNAM

Paris, May 19, 1874.

. . . I ought long ago to have answered your letter, received just before we left Florence. But somehow I could not. That long list of deaths, following so closely upon each other's heels, saddened me profoundly. I had a notion that as we grow older we get used to death, and in some sense it is true, but no habitude can make us less sensible to deaths which make us older and lonelier by widening the gap between our past and present selves. Our own lives seem to lose their continuity, and those who died long ago seem more wholly dead when some one who was associated with them and linked our memory more indissolubly with them goes out into the endless silence and separation. I was very much struck with this when I heard of the death of my cousin Amory Lowell. I had hardly seen her for many years, but she was closely intertwined with all the recollections of my early life. I can't tell how, but the thought of her kept Broomly Vale unchanged, and she brought my father and my uncle John before me as they were in those old days. A great part of my fairyland went to dust with her. . . .

For my own part, though I have had a great deal of home-sickness, I come back to Cambridge rather sadly. I have not been over-well of late. The doctor in Rome, however, gave my troubles a name—and that by robbing them of mystery has made them commonplace. He said it was *suppressed gout*. It has a fancy of gripping me in the stomach sometimes, holding on like a slow fire for seven hours at a time. It is wonderful how one gets used to things, however. But it seems to be growing lighter, and I hope to come home robust and red. . . .

TO LESLIE STEPHEN

Paris, May 27, 1874.

My dear Stephen,—I can't say that the sight of your handwriting again was good for *sair een*, for the force of mine is so far abated that I had to take your letter to the window—but it was just as good as if it had been.

I had thought about the white-choker business and all that, and from your point of view I liked your book altogether. My objection was a purely personal one. I shut my eyes resolutely (I confess) when I turn them in certain directions, and trust my instincts or my longings or whatever you choose to call them. For myself I hate to see religion compounded with police as much as you do, but I confess that my intimacy with the French makes me doubt, makes me ready to welcome almost anything that will save them from their logic and deliver them over, bound hand and foot, to anything that will give them a continuity that looks before

and after with as great a respect for facts as for syllogisms. . . .

I hope whoever stole the *Atlantic* from you did it because of my poem. You shall have another copy one of these days, but so long as you like me, you are welcome to think what you must of what I write. Besides, this is an old story with me now. It should have some virtue in it, to judge by what it took out of me.

If we had only got here as soon as I expected I should have met you in Paris. I never saw my habit of taking root in so ill a light before. It would have been so jolly—for I know all the old nooks and corners so well now that I should have been an admirable guide, and these levels suit my elderly feet. It is too bad, but our weaknesses always come home to roost at last. . . .

Always affectionately yours,

J. R. L.

TO THOMAS HUGHES

Elmwood, July 11, 1874.

Dear Friend,— . . . We had a foggy and rainy passage, but the north-westerly and south-easterly winds that made it disagreeable made it also short. . . . At about 7 A. M. of the 4th we landed, and by half-past nine I was at home again. . . .

This has been a rainy summer, so I found everything as green as in the noble old island I had just left. The birds have pretty much given over singing, but my immemorial cat-bird made music all dinner-time day before yesterday, and next morning in the early dawn

the Phœbe was calling her own name sadly, like one of Ovid's metamorphosed ladies. . . .

TO MISS GRACE NORTON

Elmwood, July 21, 1874.

. . . It is so long since I have been able to send news from Cambridge that I find a certain relish in it, and begin again to think that it is as important as most other domains of history. Was I not told yesterday by Mrs. Mary Mullins that "Cambridge had seemed kind o' lonesome without me"? and shall I not strive to atone to her (Cambridge to wit) for this two years' widowhood? I do not think, however, that the dear soul missed me very much, nor that "every jow" the bell of the First Parish gave sounded in her ear "Come back, Russell Lowell!" These returns from the underworld would be good medicine for one inclined to value himself over-duly. Things seem to have got on very well during our absence, and it is odds if nine tenths of our fellow-citizens missed us from the customed hill any more than they would if we had authentically suffered obituary. I have sometimes had traitorous surmises about Alcestis, as if she might have surprised Admetus seated before a smoking joint of one of those sheep Apollo once tended for him, and inarticulate for more material reasons than joy. Our returns, whether quick or slow, prove to us that we are small prophets in our own country. I except All-of-you, who welcomed me better than I deserved.

I do not find so many changes as I expected. . . .

TO MISS NORTON

Elmwood, Sept. 19, 1874.

. . . I have been at work, and really hard at work, in making books that I had read and marked really useful by indexes of all peculiar words and locations. I have finished in this way, since I came home, Golding's "Ovid," Warner's "Albion's England," Laing's and the Thornton "Metrical Romances," the *Chevalier au lion;* and yesterday, in eight unbroken hours, I did Barbour's "Brus." Then I have been reading many volumes of the Early English Text Society's series in the same thorough way. A professor, you know, must be learned, if he can't be anything else, and I have now reached the point where I feel sure enough of myself in Old French and Old English to make my corrections with a pen instead of a pencil as I go along. Ten hours a day, on an average, I have been at it for the last two months, and get so absorbed that I turn grudgingly to anything else. My only other reading has been Mr. Sibley's book of "Harvard Graduates," which is as unillumined, dry, and simple as the fourteenth-century prose of the Early English Texts. But it interests me and makes me laugh. It is the prettiest rescue of prey from Oblivion I ever saw. The gallant librarian, like a knight-errant, slays this giant, who carries us all captive sooner or later, and then delivers his prisoners. There are ninety-seven of them by tale, and as he fishes them out of those dismal *oubliettes* they come up dripping with the ooze of Lethe, like Curll from his dive in the Thames, like him also gallant com-

petitors for the crown of Dulness. It is the very balm of authorship. No matter how far you may be gone under, if you are a graduate of Harvard College you are sure of being dredged up again and handsomely buried, with a catalogue of your works to keep you down. I do not know when the provincialism of New England has been thrust upon me with so ineradicable a barb. Not one of their works which stands in any appreciable relation with the controlling currents of human thought or history, not one of them that has now the smallest interest for any living soul! And yet somehow I make myself a picture of the past out of this arid waste, just as the mirage rises out of the dry desert. Dear old Sibley! I would read even a sermon of his writing, so really noble and beautiful is the soul under that commonplace hull!

Since I wrote you I have finished an autobiography. Do not be frightened, dear Jane; it is only ten lines long, and I plagiarized every word of it from Drake's "American Biography," which was far better informed than I found myself to be. Last night was our first Whist Club since my return. I looked in the record, found it was John's deal, and we began as if there had been no gap. The club is now in its thirtieth year, and I was saying last night that it was, I thought, both a creditable and American fact that I had never heard a dispute or even a difference at the table in all those years. . . .

TO C. E. NORTON.

Elmwood, Oct. 7, 1874.

My dear Charles,—The nameless author of that de-

lightful poem, "The Squyr of Lowe Degree" (may God him save and see!) gives a list of every bird he can think of that sang to comfort his hero. Here they are:

1. Lavrock,
2. Nightingale,
3. Pie,
4. Popinjay,
5. Throstil,
6. Marlyn,
7. Wren,
8. Jay,
9. Sparrow,
10. Nuthatch,
11. Starling,
12. Goldfinch,
13. Ousel.

On Monday the 5th I walked up to the Oaks with Stillman, and in a quarter of an hour had noted on a paper the following birds (most of which counted by dozens):

1. Robin,
2. Wilson's thrush (singing),
3. Chewink,
4. Bluebird (warbling as in spring),
5. Phœbe (doing his best),
6. Ground sparrow (singing),
7. Tree " ("),
8. Nuthatch,
9. Flicker (laughing and crying like Andromache),
10. Chickadee (doing all he could),
11. Goldfinch,

12. Linnet,
13. Jay,
14. Crow (to balance his popinjay),
15. Catbird.

Thus I take down the gauntlet which you left hanging for all comers in your English hedge. I don't believe that hedge birds are a whit more respectable than hedge priests or hedge schoolmasters. All the while we were there the air was tinkling with one or other of them. Remember—this was in October. Three cheers for the rivers of Damascus!

Affectionately always,
HOSEA BIGLOW.

Et ego in Arcadia, says Mr. Wilbur.

TO E. L. GODKIN

Elmwood, Oct. 10, 1874.

Dear Godkin,— . . . I see they are driven at Washington to a reform of the office-holders at the South. It has always been my belief that if tenure of office had been permanent, secession would have been (if not impossible) vastly more difficult, and reconstruction more easy and simple. As it was, a large body of the most influential men in the discontented States knew that the election of Lincoln would be fatal to their bread and butter—and, after all, it is to this that the mass of men are loyal. It is well that they should be so, for habitual comfort is the main fortress of conservatism and respectability, two old-fashioned qualities for which all the finest sentiments in the world are but a windy substitute. . . .

By the way, I found a curious misprint in the new edition of Chapman (vol. ii., p. 159), which I thought might make a paragraph for the *Nation*.

> " *Caucusses*
> That cut their too large murtherous thieveries
> To their den's length still."

He means *Cacus*, of course, though the editor didn't see it, for the word doesn't occur in his index of proper names. It is a curious *sors castigatoris preli*, at any rate, and hits true, for the Caucus always cuts down its candidates to the measure of its robber's cave. It shows, too, that old Chapman pronounced *a au*.

And by this graceful transition I come to the reason why I write you to-day instead of in some indefinite future. In a sonnet printed in last week's *Nation* there is a misprint which it were well to correct. For " Nothing to *court* " *lege* " Nothing to *count*." I tried to think it made some better meaning than mine, but couldn't make it out. Thank the Power who presides over the *Nation* (who, I am given to understand, is the D—l) that I am of calmer temper than those are whom a misprint drives clean daft—I mean one in their own contribution to the general *tedium vitæ*. . . . Goodby, with gratitude always for the admirable work you are doing.

Affectionately yours,

J. R. L.

TO THOMAS HUGHES

Elmwood, Feb. 16, 187[illegible]

My dear Friend,— . . . I [have been reading] Grote s " Greece," which I had never read before, and its prosy

good sense was medicinal to me. His honest incapacity of imagination is singularly soothing. The curious political (not æsthetic) analogies struck me more forcibly than ever. I have long thought, and Grote's book confirmed me in it, that this history will first be adequately written by a Yankee. Grote's Dutch blood helped him a little, but the moment that panhellenism (the need of which he could see plainly enough two thousand odd years ago) showed itself in a million armed men over here under his very nose, he fancied them sprung from unblessed dragon's teeth,

> "And back recoiled, he knew not why,
> E'en at the sound himself had made."

The sentimentalist stood revealed under the imposing outside of the banker. It is humorously sad to me.

As with you in the early part of the winter, our talk now is wholly of the weather. So long as it was cold with you (a fact I have observed before) it was exceptionally mild here. We had a true Indian summer, and I heard birds singing by Beaver Brook in November. Being much of an hypæthral, I augured ill from it, and was sure that Winter was waiting only to get a better purchase on us. About Christmas he had got everything ready in his laboratory and shut upon us with the snap of a steel trap. Since then our thermometers have skulked in the neighborhood of zero (Fahr.). So continuous a cold has brought down the oldest inhabitant to the wretched level of us juniors. Out of doors, however, it has been noble weather, the most piquant sauce for my walks to and from College—where,

by the way, I am installed again with a class in Old French and another in Dante. In my study sometimes of an evening, when the north-west took a vigorous turn at the bellows, and the thermometer in the back parts could not be coaxed above 42°, it has been more than invigorating. But I have not given in, nor once admitted the furnace, unknown to my youth and my progenitors. I always was a natural tory, and in England (barring Dizzy) should be a staunch one. I would not give up a thing that had roots to it, though it might suck up its food from graveyards. Good-by. God bless you!

TO T. S. PERRY

Elmwood, March 2, 1875.

My dear Perry,—I don't believe I ever wrote a line for the *Harvardiana* of 1836–37. I certainly did not write the poem you mention, and doubt if I ever saw it, for I was not a subscriber. For 1837–38 I was one of the editors, and scribbled some wretched stuff, which I hope you will be too charitable to exhume. I was in my nineteenth year, but younger and greener than most boys are at that age. In short, I was as great an ass as ever brayed and thought it singing.

I believe our volume was the worst of the lot, for nobody took much interest in it, and the editing was from hand to mouth. N. Hale, Jr., did the cleverest things in it, as indeed he was perhaps the cleverest man in the class.

I hope to see you before long, but have promised some copy for the *North American Review* for Wed-

nesday and shall have to keep abreast of the press. Authorship is a wretched business, after all. . . .

TO W. D. HOWELLS

Elmwood, March 21, 1875.

Dear Howells,—There was one verse in the "Border" sonnet which, when I came to copy it, worried me with its lack of just what I wanted. Only *one?* you will say. Yes, all; but never mind—this one *most.* Instead of "Where the shy ballad could its leaves unfold," read "dared its blooms." I had liefer "cup" —but cup is already metaphoric when applied to flowers, and Bottom the Weaver would be sure to ask in one of the many journals he edits—"How unfold a cup? Does he mean one of those pocket drinking-cups—leathern inconveniencies that always *stick* when you try to unfold 'em?" Damn Bottom! We ought not to think of him, but then the Public is made up of him, and I wish him to know that I was thinking of a flower. Besides, the sonnet is, more than any other kind of verse, a deliberate composition, and "susceptible of a high polish," as the dendrologists say of the woods of certain trees. Or shall we say "grew in secret bold"? I write both on the opposite leaf, that you may choose one to paste over and not get the credit of tinkering my rhymes.

Yours always,

J. R. L.

dared its blooms
grew in secret bold.

Perhaps, after all, it is the buzzing of that *b* in blooms

and bold, answering his brother *b* in ballads, that b-witched me, and merely changing "could" to "dared" is all that is wanted.

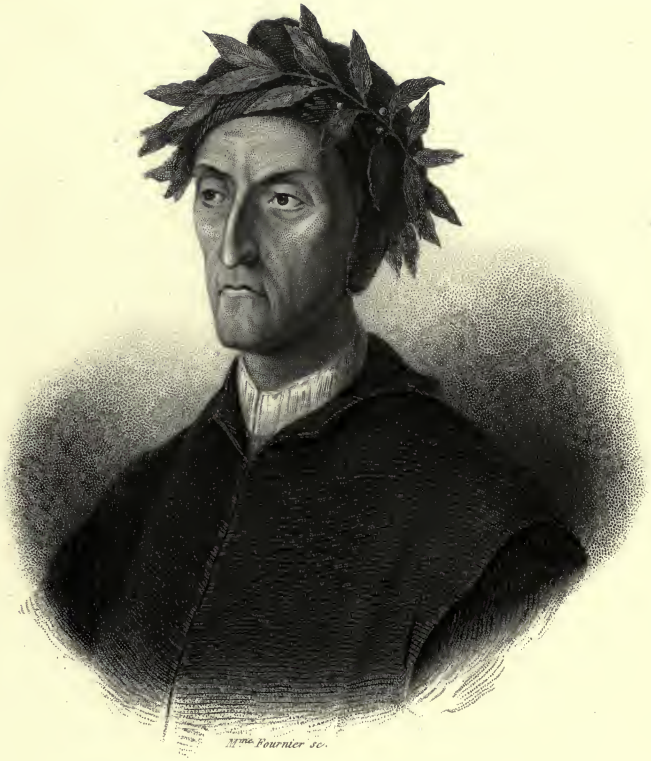
The sentiment of this sonnet pleases me.

TO MRS. ———

Elmwood, June 3, 1875.

. . . An author who was not pleased with the friendly warmth of a letter like yours must be more superhuman than I can pretend to be. I *am* pleased, and I thank you very cordially for this proof that I have been of some use in the world.

Your list is nearly complete, and I can make it so as to the *names*, though I cannot furnish you with the books. My first publication was a small volume of poems ("A Year's Life"), printed in my twenty-first year and long out of print. In 1844 I printed a prose volume of "Conversations on Some of Our Old Poets." They were mainly written three years before, and are now also these many years out of print. I have lately been urged to reprint them and possibly may, though they are naturally somewhat immature. There is a second series of "Biglow Papers" (and in my opinion the best), prefaced by an essay which, I think, might interest you. In the *North American Review* (some time in 1872, I believe) I printed an essay on Dante which contained the results, at least, of assiduous study. In the April number of this year is an article on Spenser. These would be in the library of the Peabody Institute probably. In the "Diamond" edition of my poems there are a few verses added to the "Cathedral"



DANTE.

Publié par Furne, Paris.

138
2

—perhaps some others, though I am not sure. I think your list is otherwise complete. If not, I shall be obliged to you if you will allow me to send you any that may be lacking. In the *Atlantic Monthly* for May, 1874, is an "Elegy on Agassiz" which, I suspect, is among my best verse. In the *Atlantic* for August, 1870, is an introduction by me to some "Extracts from the Journal of a Virginian travelling in New England." Towards the end of it is a passage the sentiment of which will perhaps please you. At any rate, it has always been my own way of thinking on that point. I was roundly abused in some of the newspapers at the time, but I am happy in believing that the whole North is now come round to where I then stood.

But pardon me, I am getting garrulous without the excuse of senility. One is liable to these pitfalls when rapt in the contemplation of that precious being, who, in proportion as he interests us, is apt to be a bore to the rest of mankind. Be so good as to let me know what volumes you want, and they shall be sent to your address. . . .

TO THE SAME

Elmwood, June 15, 1875.

. . . I meant that so important a package as that which you acknowledged in such friendly terms should have been heralded by a letter in answer to yours. I meant to have torn out all the prints in the book (which are simply disgusting—especially that of *Zekle and Huldy*), but I forgot it. I divine in your note of this morning a certain sensitiveness about its unan-

swered forerunner (as if you had said too much) which quite justifies me in the pleasure I had when I read it. Mrs. Lowell liked it as much as I did. I am quite sure there can be no sweeter and kindlier feeling than having been something to somebody in this purely disembodied way. Only the Somebody must be of the right kind. You must pardon me the unseemly confidence, but I receive a great many letters from women (I suppose all poets do), and hardly ever one that I can answer. They are commonly like those of Mrs. Tilton, some of which I have seen in the newspapers, a kind of stuff that makes sensible women doubt the capacity of their sex for any political association with men. I need not say that yours was of quite another complexion, and such as an honest man could be heartily pleased with. So far from tickling my vanity, it added to my self-distrust, and made me wonder how I had deserved so grateful a congratulation. It did me real good in quickening my feeling of responsibility to myself, while it encouraged me to think that I had sometimes cast my bread upon waters which did not steadily ebb towards oblivion.

I fear the volume I sent you will try your eyes sadly, but it is the most complete edition of what I have written in verse. I hope you will permit me to send you also my two volumes of prose, to which a third will be added next autumn. The article on Spenser has been wholly rewritten since you heard it, and contains only a passage or two here and there which were in the lecture.

I should have answered your letter at once, but I am

really a very busy man, and (except in verse) a much slower writer than when I was younger. It is harder to weigh anchor than it used to be, and there is no Lapland witch to sell a fair wind to an old fellow of fifty-six. You shall let me count you for one, nevertheless, for I felt my sails strain at the yards in the friendly breath of your sympathy.

Expect another package from me ere long, but do not feel that I shall be forever bombarding you with my books. I doubt if I shall ever lecture in Baltimore (or anywhere else again)—for I like it not. I am sure I should have done it with more spirit before, had I known how sympathetic an auditor I had. . . .

TO THE SAME

Elmwood, July 6, 1875.

. . . My having been very busy must plead my pardon (for I assume it in advance) for not answering your last letter sooner. We, too, here in my birthplace, having found out that something happened here a hundred years ago, must have our centennial, and, since my friend and townsman Dr. Holmes couldn't be had, I felt bound to do the poetry for the day. We have still standing the elm under which Washington took command of the *American* (till then *provincial*) army, and under which also Whitefield had preached some thirty years before. I took advantage of the occasion to hold out a hand of kindly reconciliation to Virginia. I could do it with the profounder feeling, that no family lost more than mine by the civil war. Three neph-

ews (the hope of our race) were killed in one or other of the Virginia battles, and three cousins on other of those bloody fields. The poem will be printed in the *Atlantic* for August, and will, I hope and believe, do good.

So you are in Alexandria, a town of which I have very pleasant memories, now fifty years old. I spent some days in the old Carroll house there with the Carrolls, who are connections of mine by marriage. They are all gone, but I hope the dear old house is still standing. Pray go and see it and tell me if the river behind it be as pretty, and the English walnuts in front as fine as I remember. The house, I think, must be large, for (unless it loom through the haze of memory) it was larger than that in which I was born and still live, and that is not a small one.

I suppose it must have been the extreme solitude in which I grew up, and my consequent unconsciousness of any public, that made me so frankly communicative. Poets get their sorrows and passions out of themselves by carving the lava (grown cold) into pretty forms. I should not be so indiscreet now, I suppose, and yet a living verse can only be made of a living experience—and that our own. One of my most personal poems, "After the Burial," has roused strange echoes in men who assured me they were generally insensible to poetry. After all, the only stuff a solitary man has to spin is himself.

I am sorry you should write in so desponding a tone of yourself. Surely at your age life (imposture as it often is) has many satisfactions left. Dame Life, to

be sure, keeps a gambling-table; but even if we have played for a great stake and lost, we must recollect that she is always ready to lend us what we need for another chance. Literature and work are the exhaustless *solamina vitae*, and if you find so much pleasure in what I have done (who am but third-rate compared with the masters) you have yet a great deal to enjoy.

Do not let your friendly enthusiasm (a very great pleasure to me personally) lead you to exaggerate my merits, or overlook my defects. I think more might have been made of me if I could have given my whole life to poetry, for it is an art as well as a gift, but you must try to see me as I am.

I have ordered my two books to be sent to your Alexandria address, and enclose two slips of paper with my good wishes on them that you may paste them into the volumes to remind you whence they came. I should have sent them sooner, but besides my Centennial task, I had to preside over our Commencement dinner, a service that seems simple enough, but which worries a shy man like myself to a degree that would make you laugh. . . .

TO JOHN W. FIELD

Elmwood, July 14, 1875.

. . . I am sitting now (with Fanny sewing beside me) on our new veranda, which we built last fall on the north side of the house, and find inexpugnably delightful. We are having a *green* summer this year, and today is rather like June than July, with a sea-breeze (you

call it east wind, I believe, in Europe) winnowing the heat away, and trees and clouds as they only are at home where they are old friends. The catalpa is just coming into blossom under my eyes, and the chestnut hard by is hoary with blossoms, making it look all the younger, like powder on the head of a girl of eighteen. A quail is calling "Bob White" over in the field, butterflies are shimmering over Fanny's flowers, robins are singing with all their might, and there will come a humming-bird before long. I see the masts in the river and the spires in the town, and whatever noise of traffic comes to me now and then from the road but emphasizes the feeling of seclusion. What is your lake of Geneva to this? . . .

TO C. E. NORTON

Elmwood, Aug. 3, 1875.

. . . It is now thirty-seven years since I first knew him [Emerson], and he showed me some of his walks in Concord, especially, I remember, "the Cliff." And Edmund Quincy is sixty-eight! How we move on, without show of motion, like shadows of trees in the sun! But one's horizon widens, thank God! I often wonder over this unconscious broadening of the mind. We absorb experience at all our pores till by and by our whole substance is changed and renewed. But in order to be wise we must be able to enter again into the consciousness of these modes of being we have sloughed off.

> All that I was I am, and all the more
> For being other than I was before;
> And what I spent is still my best of store. . . .

TO MRS. ———

Elmwood, Aug. 5, 1875.

. . . Your letter gave me a great deal of pleasure, for surely there can be no purer satisfaction than that of feeling that you are making another person happier; and, though I may think that you exaggerate my absolute merits, yet I can gratefully accept your statement of them so far as regards yourself without abatement. It is something to be that to somebody which in the day of inexperience one dreamed of being to all. It is, I assure you, a great encouragement to me, and of the kind that suits my temper best, for it will be a spur in the flank of my endeavor to deserve such gratitude. I have always had a profound contempt for what is called Public Opinion (that is, the judgment of the incapable Many as compared with that of the discerning Few), and a rooted dislike of notoriety, which, in this age of newspapers, is our German-silver substitute for real plate, and "in all respects as good as" the true thing—except that it isn't the true thing. But I am not insensible to such hearty sympathy as yours, and at fifty-six, after a life honestly devoted to what I conceived the true aims of literature, I may confess without vanity that it is very sweet to encounter a reader like you. None of my critics, I am sure, can be more keenly aware than I of my manifold shortcomings, but I think I have done some things well, and I was pleased to find that you had read my essay on Dryden oftener than any other, for I believe it to be my best. This encouragement of yours has been a real help to me, for

it has turned the scale of my decision not to be content with a critique of Wordsworth written twenty years ago (and which the hot weather had almost persuaded me to print with a little cobbling), but to rewrite it. So, if I make anything of it, I shall owe it to you in good measure, and shall feel so much the *less* in your debt—that does not strike you as inscrutable paradox, does it?

Let me counsel you to read a little German every day, and you will be surprised to find how soon it grows easy to you. Insist on knowing the exact meaning of every sentence, and use your grammar for that only. In this way you will insensibly grow familiar with the grammatical construction. I think a great deal time is wasted in preliminary studies of grammar. Tumble into deep waters at once if you would learn to swim. German is the *open sesame* to a large culture, for it is the language of all others most pliable for the translation of other tongues, and everything has been rendered into it.

I am glad you have mountains to look out upon. My view is more limited, but is very dear to me, for it is what my eyes first looked on, and I trust will look on last. A group of tall pines planted by my father, and my lifelong friends, murmurs to [me] as I write with messages out of the past and mysterious premonitions of the future. My wife's flowers recall her sweetly to me in her absence from home, and the leaves of her morning-glories that shelter the veranda where I sit whisper of her. A horse-chestnut, of which I planted the seed more than fifty years ago, lifts its huge stack

of shade before me and loves me with all its leaves. I should be as happy as a humming-bird were I not printing another volume of essays. Everything I do seems so poor to me when I see it in print. But courage! there is a kindly reader in Baltimore who will find out some good in the book and thank me for it more than I deserve.

> Not what we did, but what we meant to do,
> Lay in your scales, just Fates, and so decide.
> Alas, even then how much remains to rue!
> How little for our solace or our pride!
>
> They frown and answer: "Only what is done
> We make account of; dreams may not be weighed,
> Nor with their down-shod feet the race is run,
> And reached at last the laurel's sacred shade."

I read your essay on the weather with much interest. Living in the country all my life, I am a good weather-caster, and was pleased to find that I had discovered by my own observation that upper current you speak of. Thirty-four years ago, when you were a little girl, I was writing,

> "Who heeds not how the lower gusts are working,
> Knowing that one sure wind blows on above";

and had observed that its current was from north-west to south-east, though I did not know why till you told me. . . .

P. S. I give you our latest weather-news. A fine thunder-storm is limbering up its guns in the south-west. . . .

TO THE SAME

Elmwood, Sept. 21, 1875.

. . . That I did not sooner answer your letter, was simply because for the last six weeks I have been rather unwell. I am now better, and surely a man of fifty-six who had never taken a pill till now has no great reason to repine. . . .

You ask me if I am an Episcopalian. No, though I prefer the service of the Church of England, and attend it from time to time. But I am not much of a church-goer, because I so seldom find any preaching that does not make me impatient and do me more harm than good. I confess to a strong lurch towards Calvinism (in some of its doctrines) that strengthens as I grow older. Perhaps it may be some consolation to you that my mother was born and bred an Episcopalian. . . .

My essay on Wordsworth has been interrupted by my illness, which in some way confused my head so that I could not get on with it. I fear the essay when finished will show some marks of it. The mere physical exertion of writing makes me impatient. But after all, work of one kind or another is the only tonic for mind or character; . . . it makes me blush to think how dependent I am upon moods for the power to write with any hope of pleasing myself. I am just enough independent of literature as a profession to encourage this nicety (perhaps I should call it weakness) in me. Still I have the satisfaction of thinking that I have often worked hard when it was against the grain.

While I was most unwell, I could not find any reading that would seclude me from myself till one day I bethought me of Calderon. I took down a volume of his plays, and in half an hour was completely absorbed. He is surely one of the most marvellous of poets. I have recorded my debt to him in a poem, "The Nightingale in the Study." It is greater now, and I confess that the power of his charm interested me enough to make me think it might also interest you. . . .

TO C. E. NORTON

Elmwood, Sept. 23, 1875.

. . . For about a week I could read nothing but Calderon — a continual delight, like walking in a wood where there is a general sameness in the scenery and yet a constant vicissitude of light and shade, an endless variety of growth. He is certainly the most *delightful* of poets. Such fertility, such a gilding of the surfaces of things with fancy, or infusion of them with the more potent fires of imagination, such lightsomeness of humor! Even his tragedies somehow are not tragic to me, though terrible enough sometimes, for everybody has such a talent for being consoled, and that out of hand. Life with him is too short and too uncertain for sorrow to last longer than to the end of the scene, if so long. As Ate makes her exit she hands her torch to Hymen, who dances in brandishing it with an *Io!* The passions (some of the most unchristian of 'em) are made religious duties, which once fulfilled, you begin life anew with a clear conscience. . . .

TO R. S. CHILTON

Elmwood, Oct. 16, 1875.

Dear Sir,—I *thought* I had answered your letter long ago as I ought, for I was much obliged to you for your kind remembrance of me and for the photograph. But I was much worried during the spring and early summer by Centennials and things, and a heap of letters gathered ere I was aware under my bronze hen, till she looks as if [she had] been laying them ever since, and were now brooding on them with a fiendish hope of hatching out a clutch that shall hereafter pair and multiply.

I am glad you like my "Great Elm" poem. Occasional verses are always risky, and Centennials most of all, as being expected to have in them the pith and marrow of a hundred years. Then, too, in composing one is confronted with his audience, which he cannot help measuring by the dullest of his fellow-citizens, and this is far from inspiring. However, I seem to have escaped falling flat and shaming my worshippers — which was more than I could hope. The Concord poem was an improvisation written in the two days before the celebration, but the Cambridge one was composed amid all kinds of alien distractions.

Do you remember showing me, in Page's studio, more than thirty years ago, a pair of sleeve-buttons of Burns's? I hope you have them still. I have had a kind of poem about them buzzing in my head ever since. It is better there than it would be if I could open the window and chase it out of doors.*

* One of these sleeve-buttons was afterwards given to Lowell; it is now in the Cabinet of the Library of Harvard University.

I suppose you are a gray old boy by this time. I am just beginning to grizzle with the first hoar-frost. I have two grandsons, children of my only daughter and surviving child, fine boys both of them. They make me younger, I think.

I enclose a photograph taken two years ago in Rome by an amateur. It is, I believe, a tolerable *dead* likeness, and may serve to recall me to your memory. I am printing a new volume of essays, my work on which was broken off by an illness, the first (except gout) I ever had. But I am now for a few days mending rapidly. It was *liver*, and upset me utterly.

With all kindly remembrance,

Cordially yours,

J. R. Lowell.

TO MRS. ———

Elmwood, Nov. 20, 1875.

The thought of your so long unanswered letter has been giving my conscience an unpleasant twinge for some time, but I anodyned it with the assurance that you would be too kind to misinterpret my silence. The truth is that I have been fussing over the volume I am printing, and fussing, too, without much progress, for my wits are clogged by not being yet quite recovered from my late illness. But I hope to be rid of my task (after a fashion) in a few days now. The book will contain essays on Dante, Spenser, Wordsworth, and shorter ones on Milton (criticism of an edition, rather than of the poet) and Keats.

. . . I am often struck with the fact that people of a

sceptical turn, and who look upon all traditional faiths as broken reeds, are sure to lay hold of some private bulrush of credulity and fancy it an oak. For myself, I look upon a belief as none the worse but rather the better for being hereditary, prizing as I do whatever helps to give continuity to the being and doing of man, and an accumulated force to his character.

As for my coming to Baltimore, I fear it is out of the question, at least for the present. I have classes at the College three times a week and no long vacation till summer. At Christmas I always like to be by my own fireside, where a huge Yule-log always blazes. This year I shall be quite patriarchal, for my daughter with her husband and two boys will be with us. There is something wonderful in being a grandfather. It gives one a sense of almost tenderer paternity without the responsibilities that commonly wait upon it. . . .

TO R. W. GILDER

Elmwood, Dec. 15, 1875.

. . . As the sight of you four young lovers under my friend Norton's familiar pines transported me for a moment to a more innocent garden of Boccaccio, and prettily renewed for me my own youth and forward-looking days, so your little book has given me a pleasure the same in kind though more poignant in degree. I cannot praise it better than in saying that as I read I kept murmuring to myself, "It dallies with the innocence of love like the old age." Here and there I might shake my head (gray hairs, you know, have a trick of setting

our heads ashake), but nearly all I liked and liked thoroughly. Your book is too subtle for the many, but the sense of lovers is finer and they will find it out. You will be the harmless Galeotto between many a dumb passion and itself.

But I know you are grumbling to yourself, "Why does he praise my verses and say nothing of *her* illustrations?" I could not help liking their grace and fancy. They seemed to me like flowers a lover had given his mistress and begged again, after she had worn them in her stomacher till they had caught some enchantment from their happy destiny. I thank you both for a great deal of pure pleasure that will last—as only pure pleasures do.

This is the first day I have had free of proof-sheets, or I should have written sooner. Cabbage-leaves and rose-leaves do not sort well together. Recall me, I pray you, to Mrs. Gilder's memory, and believe me

Very thankfully yours,

J. R. Lowell.

TO MRS. ———

Elmwood, Dec. 25, 1875.

. . . I am reading and commenting "Don Quixote" to the students, and in order to do it intelligently have been making a careful study of it over again. I am not sorry, for it has been a long pleasure, and when one is obliged to read with a microscope, one sees many things that would otherwise escape him. It is, indeed, a wonderful book, as full of good sense and good feeling as of profound, and therefore imperishable, humor.

I had hoped before this to have sent you my new book, but it hung long on my hands and is not yet out. You are so partial (one of the many excellent qualities in your sex) that I dare say you may not find it so tedious as it has been to me. But if you should be bored by it, I shall like you none the less.

Your industry amazes me, who am rather an unwilling writer, though I am one of the last (I fear) of the great readers. If I were to tell how many hours a day I have studied, nobody would believe me except you. And the pitiful part of it is, that just when we are wise enough to profit by our accumulations our memory grows blurred, like the pencil entries in a note-book carried long in the pocket.

It is a gloomy Christmas day. Last night it snowed nobly for an hour or two and then turned to rain, and to-day is sullen with its disappointment. It is drizzling and freezing as it falls, and though the trees will look very pretty to-morrow if the sun shine, I never quite like it, because the trees always suffer, and I feel for them as my oldest friends.

I had expected my two grandsons to dinner, but the weather will not let them run the risk, so I am to have my old friend Mr. John Holmes (the best and most delightful of men), and a student whom I found to be without any chance at other than a dinner in Commons. . . .

TO THE SAME

Elmwood, Jan. 17, 1876.

. . . I sent you day before yesterday my new book,

and that copy was the first I sent to any one, for I thought your partiality would perhaps find more pleasure in it than the rest of the world. I took such a disgust at it while it was passing through the press that I have not ventured to look into it since it was published. Yet, though I could not (muddle-headed as I was all summer with illness) give it the order and proportion that I would, I think you will find something in it to like.

I go on in my usual routine, only varied by reading and commenting "Don Quixote" on Thursday evenings. An audience is apt to set me at cross-purposes with myself, but I am told that I give pleasure. . . .

TO JOEL BENTON

Elmwood, Jan. 19, 1876.*

Dear Sir,—I thank you for the manly way in which you put yourself at my side when I had fallen among

* This letter was printed, with a Note by Mr. Benton, in the *Century* magazine for November, 1891. The following is a portion of Mr. Benton's Note:

"On Mr. Lowell's return from Europe in 1875 he wrote two brief poems for the *Nation*, which were entitled respectively 'The World's Fair, 1876,' and 'Tempora Mutantur.' In these he described certain dangerous symptoms of the body politic. . . . The following lines are a fair sample of the tone and direction of the poems. Mr. Lowell, speaking for Brother Jonathan, recommends the exhibition of some of our political inventions of that day.

"'Show 'em your Civil Service, and explain
How all men's loss is everybody's gain;
Show your new patent to increase your rents
By paying quarters for collecting cents;
Show your short cut to cure financial ills
By making paper-collars current bills;
Show your new bleaching-process, cheap and brief,
To wit: a jury chosen by the thief;

thieves, still more for the pithy and well-considered words with which you confirm and maintain my side of the quarrel. At my time of life one is not apt to vex

> Show your State legislatures; show your Rings;
> And challenge Europe to produce such things
> As high officials sitting half in sight
> To share the plunder and to fix things right;
> If that don't fetch her, why, you only need
> To show your latest style in martyrs—Tweed:
> She'll find it hard to hide her spiteful tears
> At such advance in one poor hundred years.'

"In 'Tempora Mutantur' occur these lines:

> "'A hundred years ago,
> If men were knaves, why, people called them so,
> And crime could see the prison-portal bend
> Its brow severe at no long vista's end;
> In those days for plain things plain words would serve;
> Men had not learned to admire the graceful swerve
> Wherewith the Æsthetic Nature's genial mood
> Makes public duty slope to private good.
>
> But now that "Statesmanship" is just a way
> To dodge the primal curse and make it pay,
> Since Office means a kind of patent drill
> To force an entrance to the Nation's till,
> And peculation something rather less
> Risky than if you spelt it with an *s*;
>
> With generous curve we draw the moral line:
> Our swindlers are permitted to resign;
> Their guilt is wrapped in deferential names,
> And twenty sympathize for one that blames.
>
> The public servant who has stolen or lied,
> If called on, may resign with honest pride:
> As unjust favor put him in, why doubt
> Disfavor as unjust has turned him out?
> Even if indicted, what is that but fudge
> To him who counted-in the elective judge?
> Whitewashed, he quits the politician's strife,
> At ease in mind, with pockets filled for life.'

"These caustic lines awakened resentment. A large proportion of the press (and particularly that part of it which was of his

his soul at any criticism, but I confess that in this case I was more than annoyed, I was even saddened. For what was said was so childish and showed such shallowness, such levity, and such dulness of apprehension both in politics and morals on the part of those who claim to direct public opinion (as, alas! they too often do) as to confirm me in my gravest apprehensions. I believe "The World's Fair" gave the greatest offence. They had not even the wit to see that I put my sarcasm into the mouth of Brother Jonathan, thereby implying and meaning to imply that the common-sense of my countrymen was awakening to the facts, and that *therefore* things were perhaps not so desperate as they seemed.

I had just come home from a two years' stay in Europe, so it was discovered that I had been corrupted by association with foreign aristocracies! I need not say to you that the society I frequented in Europe was what it is at home—that of my wife, my studies, and the best nature and art within my reach. But I confess that I was embittered by my experience. Wherever I

own political faith) pursued him with no polite epithets, and with not a little persistence. It was charged that he was no true American; that he was, in fact, a snob; that he had elbowed against dukes and lords so much and so long that he could not any longer tolerate Democracy. And for many weeks this and other equally puerile nonsense went on unrebuked.

"It occurred to me at last to say what was obvious, and record my sympathy with Mr. Lowell's position. That his character and motives were above all need of defence I knew, but such a shocking perversion of his ideas and intentions was altogether too flagrant to pass unnoticed. I therefore took up the cudgels for what seemed to me to be true; and, under the title of 'Mr. Lowell's Recent Political Verse,' volunteered, in the *Christian Union* of December 15, 1875, a defence of his friendly chidings."

went I was put on the defensive. Whatever extracts I saw from American papers told of some new fraud or defalcation, public or private. It was sixteen years since my last visit abroad, and I found a very striking change in the feeling towards America and Americans. An Englishman was everywhere treated with a certain deference: Americans were at best tolerated. The example of America was everywhere urged in France as an argument against republican forms of government. It was fruitless to say that the people were still sound when the Body Politic which draws its life from them showed such blotches and sores. I came home, and instead of wrath at such abominations, I found banter. I was profoundly shocked, for I had received my earliest impressions in a community the most virtuous, I believe, that ever existed. . . . On my return I found that community struggling half hopelessly to prevent General Butler from being put in its highest office against the will of all its best citizens. I found Boutwell, one of its senators, a chief obstacle to Civil-Service reform (our main hope). . . . I saw Banks returned by a larger majority than any other member of the lower house. . . . In the Commonwealth that built the first free school and the first college, I heard culture openly derided. I suppose I like to be liked as well as other men. Certainly I would rather be left to my studies than meddle with politics. But I had attained to some consideration, and my duty was plain. I wrote what I did in the plainest way, that he who ran might read, and that I hit the mark I aimed at is proved by the attacks against which you so generously defend me. These fellows have no



Benj F Butler

notion what love of country means. It is in my very blood and bones. If I am not an American, who ever was?

I am no pessimist, nor ever was, . . . but is not the Beecher horror disheartening? Is not Delano discouraging? and Babcock atop of him? . . . What fills me with doubt and dismay is the degradation of the moral tone. Is it or is it not a result of Democracy? Is ours a "government of the people by the people for the people," or a Kakistocracy rather, for the benefit of knaves at the cost of fools? Democracy is, after all, nothing more than an experiment like another, and I know only one way of judging it—by its results. Democracy in itself is no more sacred than monarchy. It is Man who is sacred; it is his duties and opportunities, not his rights, that nowadays need reinforcement. It is honor, justice, culture, that make liberty invaluable, else worse than worthless if it mean only freedom to be base and brutal. As things have been going lately, it would surprise no one if the officers who had Tweed in charge should demand a reward for their connivance in the evasion of that popular hero. I am old enough to remember many things, and what I remember I meditate upon. My opinions do not live from hand to mouth. And so long as I live I will be no writer of birthday odes to King Demos any more than I would be to King Log, nor shall I think *our* cant any more sacred than any other. Let us all work together (and the task will need us all) to make Democracy possible. It certainly is no invention to go of itself any more than the perpetual motion.

Forgive me for this long letter of justification, which I am willing to write for your friendly eye, though I should scorn to make any public defence. Let the tenor of my life and writings defend me.

Cordially yours,

J. R. Lowell.

TO EDWARD P. BLISS

Elmwood, April 4, 1876.

Dear Sir,—Though I don't think the function you wish me to perform quite in my line, I am willing to do *anything* which may be thought helpful in a movement of which I heartily approve. I am not so hopeful, I confess, as I was thirty years ago; yet, if there be any hope, it is in getting independent thinkers to be independent voters.

Very truly yours,

J. R. Lowell.*

* Mr. Bliss has favored me with the following statement, explanatory of the preceding letter: "In the spring of 1876 some young men in Cambridge were not contented with the tendencies in the Republican party. We had a meeting in one of the rooms in Stoughton Hall, and planned to call a larger meeting, inviting about sixty citizens, at which we could better determine how to help right our politics. I was directed to invite Professor Lowell to preside at the proposed meeting. I received from him the foregoing letter.

"At this meeting Mr. Lowell advised with us very seriously, and the result was that we organized a committee of forty, eight from each ward, to see that we had fair caucuses. At that time the Boston Custom-House officials were used to managing all our caucuses, and just then they wanted to secure delegates favorable to Mr. Blaine's nomination. Mr. Lowell was elected president of the whole committee. The caucuses in all wards were so well looked after by these amateurs in politics that anti-Blaine delegates were chosen, to the surprise of the Custom-House men. At Jamaica Plains there was a similar committee. We were in the same district then. Members of their committee arranged with some of us that at the district convention we

TO LESLIE STEPHEN

Elmwood, April 10, 1876.

. . . Last night I appeared in a new capacity as chairman of a political meeting, where I fear I made an ass of myself. It was got up by young men who wish to rouse people to their duty in attending caucuses and getting them out of the hands of professionals. I haven't much hope (one has rounded that cape by the time he is fifty), but am willing to try anything. We have got to work back from a democracy to our original institution as a republic again. Our present system has resulted in our being governed by a secret and irresponsible club called the United States Senate for their own private benefit. Our Republican newspapers seem to find a strange consolation in the vile character of the witnesses against our more illustrious swindlers; but how are we to get over the fact that, however rotten and perjured these rascals may be, they were all in the confidential employment of the very men who try to discredit them? I think the row is likely to do good, however, in getting us better candidates in the next presidential election, and waking everybody up to the screaming necessity of reform in our Civil Service. It doesn't cheer me much to be told that it was just as bad in England under Sir Robert Walpole. In the first place, it wasn't, and, in the second, suppose it was? . . .

would try to send as delegates to Cincinnati the presidents of the two committees, who were the Rev. Dr. James F. Clarke and Professor J. R. Lowell. We were successful. Mr. Lowell was a new personage in active politics, and as delegate and afterwards presidential elector drew special attention."

TO MRS. ———

Elmwood, April 19, 1876.

. . . But I did not tell you the worst. Horace confesses that he was stout, or at any rate implies it. Thomson says plumply that he was *fat*—an odious word. I suppose Coleridge would have admitted a certain amiable rotundity of presence. Byron wrestled with increasing flesh, as it had been well for him to do against growing fleshliness. But such is the weakness of our poor human nature that never one of them could bring himself to the shameful confession that he had lost his *waist*. There is the tender spot, and I claim a certain amount of admiration when I admit that *mine* has been growing more and more obscure (like many a passage in Browning) for several years. Now, a waist is as important in a poet's economy as in a woman's. But this is too sad a topic. You see I disenchant you by installments—and, how shall I say it? I am writing at this moment with spectacles (not *nippers*, mind you, but the steel-bowed deformity which pale young parsons love) across my prosaic nose. It is horrible, but it is true. I have, to be sure, the saving grace of being still a little touchy about them, and have never yet allowed any of the servants to see me in my debasement. *Nippers* have still a pretension of foppishness about them, and he who is foppish has not yet abandoned the last stronghold of youth, or, if he has, he at least marches out with the honors of war. I have laid down my arms. That steel bow is Romance's Caudine Forks. I used to have the eye of a hawk, and a few days ago

I mistook a flight of snow-birds for English sparrows! Have you still the courage to come? If you have, we shall be all the gladder to see you, and I will make you welcome to whatever I have contrived to save from the wreck of myself. Age makes Robinson Crusoes of the best of us, and makes us ingenious in contrivances and substitutes, but what cunning expedient will ever replace youth? In one respect only I have lost nothing. I think I am as great a fool as ever, and that is no small comfort. I believe, too, that I still feel the blind motions of spring in my veins with the same sense of *prickle* as trees do, for I suppose their sense of April must be very much like ours when a limb that has been asleep, as we call it, is fumbling after its suspended sensation again.

Are you a stout walker? If you are, I will show you my oaks while you are here. If you are not, I will still contrive to make you acquainted with them in some more ignominious way. They will forgive you, I dare say, for the sake of so old a friend as I. Besides, they are no great pedestrians themselves unless, like Shelley's Appenine, they walk abroad in the storm. We haven't much to show here. We are a flat country, you know, but not without our charm, and I love Nature, I confess, not to be always on her high horse and with her tragic mask on. Bostonians generally (I am not a Bostonian) seem to have two notions of hospitality—a dinner with people you never saw before nor ever wish to see again, and a drive in Mount Auburn cemetery, where you will see the worst man can do in the way of disfiguring nature. Your memory of

the dinner is expected to reconcile you to the prospect of the graveyard. But I am getting treasonable.

Now to business. You must let me know in good season when you are coming, because I wish to make sure of some pleasant people for you to meet. Don't come till May, if you can help it, for our spring is backward and we don't do ourselves justice yet. But come at any rate. . . .

TO H. W. LONGFELLOW

Elmwood, May 3, 1876.

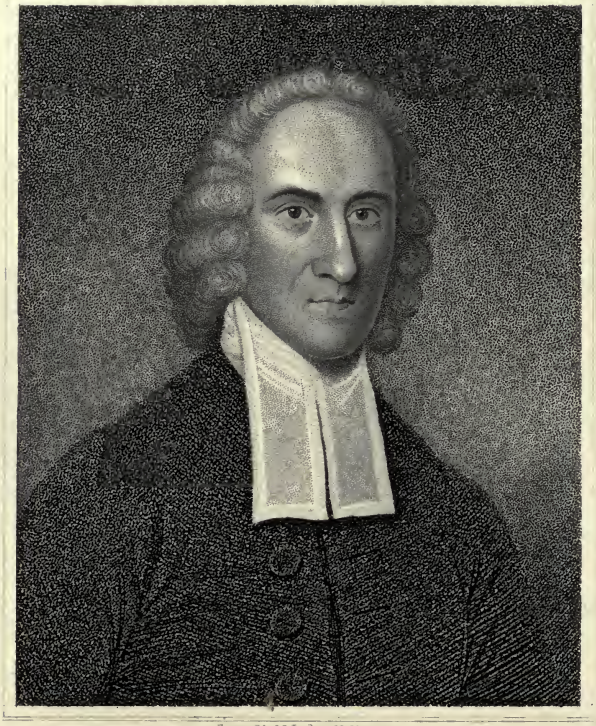
Dear Longfellow,—Will you dine with me on Saturday at six? I have a Baltimore friend coming, and depend on you.

I had such a pleasure yesterday that I should like to share it with you to whom I owed it. J. R. Osgood & Co. sent me a copy of your Household Edition to show me what it was, as they propose one of me. I had been reading over with dismay my own poems to weed out the misprints, and was awfully disheartened to find how bad they (the poems) were. Then I took up your book to see what the type was, and before I knew it I had been reading two hours and more. I never wondered at your popularity, nor thought it wicked in you; but if I *had* wondered, I should no longer, for you sang me out of all my worries. To be sure they came back when I opened my own book again—but that was no fault of yours.

If not Saturday, will you say Sunday? My friend is a Mrs. ——, and a very nice person indeed.

Yours always,

J. R. L.



Engraved by S.S. Jocelyn & S.H. Munson.

REV. JONA. EDWARDS.

TO LESLIE STEPHEN

Elmwood, May 15, 1876.

. . . *Have* I read your book?* I wish you had read it so carefully, for then I should not have a string of *errata* to send you for your next edition, the first of them peculiarly exasperating, because it spoils one of Browne's most imaginative passages, a passage I never think of without a thrill. It is on page 40, where "dreams" has usurped the place of "drums." . . . I may be partial, though I don't think I am, and even were I, towards whom have I a better privilege of partiality than towards you? To be sure, I could not help being constantly reminded of you as I read; but that surely is a chief merit of the book, proving it to be distinctively yours and nobody's else. I *was* especially interested in Jonathan Edwards, with whom (except in his physical notions of hell) I have a great sympathy —a case of *reversion*, I suppose, to some Puritan ancestor. If he had only conceived of damnation as a spiritual state, the very horror of which consists (to our deeper apprehension) in its being delightful to who is in it, I could go along with him altogether. What you say of his isolation is particularly good, and applies to American literature more or less even yet. We lack the stimulus whether of rivalry or sympathy. I liked your estimate of Browne very much. It is very subtle and appreciative, though I think you misapprehend the scope of the "Pseudodoxia" a little. Browne was Montaigne's truest disciple, and his deference to certain

* "Hours in a Library."

superstitions is greatly analogous to old Michel's pilgrimage to Loreto. He always assumes the air of a believer the more devoutly when he is about to hint something especially unorthodox. Always sceptical, he makes us feel the absurdities of the vulgar faith by setting forth some monstrous deduction that may be drawn from them. Take the passage you quote from the "Religio," on pages 23–24, for example. In the "Pseudodoxia" Browne is always scattering (as it seems to me) the seeds of scepticism, though the bags that contain them are all carefully labelled "Herb of Grace." But I may be wrong, for I speak from a long-agone general impression, not having studied Browne much for a good many years. I was glad of your kind word for good old Crabbe, which was very just and discriminating. I thank you also for your *Rettung* (as Lessing would have called it) of Horace Walpole. The "Hazlitt," too, though you rate him higher than I should, strikes me as very good. In the whole book there is a union of impartial good sense and sensibility of appreciation that is very rare in criticism. And then there are charity and modesty. I read it straight through at a sitting and wished there had been more, and not because it was yours, but because I was interested. But because it was yours, I am heartily glad it is so good. I am impatient for your other book.* It is on a capital subject and I am sure it will be ably handled.

I have published another volume, and I ought long

* "English Thought in the Eighteenth Century."

ago to have sent you a copy, but I took a disgust at it so soon as I saw it in print. I was really ill all the time it was going through the press, so that I sometimes could not even read a proof for weeks, and had to put in at random some things I would rather have left for a posthumous edition of my works (if I ever have one), when people read with kindlier eyes. But I will post you a copy soon.

Thank you for the plan.* I shall be able to fancy you now very well in your new house, for I remember all that neighborhood well, and it is already associated with you, since I used to pass it in my way to Southwell Gardens. I am glad to think that little Laura will be so near a good playground and something like the country. I fear you will not have a study I shall like so well as that *Stylites* one on the top of your other house, which I know so thoroughly. It was the one place in the wilderness of London where I felt thoroughly at home. I was somehow an American everywhere else, but there I was a friend, and so far, you know, it was a foretaste of heaven.

I didn't mean any reproach (but then you wouldn't have thought I did) in what I said about Providence, whatever it was. I don't meddle with what my friends believe or reject, any more than I ask whether they are rich or poor. I love *them.* I sometimes think they will smile (as Dante makes St. Gregory) when they open their eyes in the other world. And so doubtless shall I, for I have no Murray or Baedeker

* Of Mr. Stephen's new house, for which Lowell had asked.

for those parts. I don't think a view of the universe from the stocks of any creed a very satisfactory one. But I continue to shut my eyes resolutely in certain speculative directions, and am willing to find solace in certain intimations that seem to me from a region higher than my reason. When they tell me that I can't *know* certain things, I am apt to wonder how *they* can be sure of that, and whether there may not be things which they *can't* know. I went through my reaction so early and so violently that I have been settling backward towards equilibrium ever since. As I can't be certain, I won't be positive, and wouldn't drop some chapters of the Old Testament, even, for all the science that ever undertook to tell me what it doesn't know. They go about to prove to me from a lot of nasty savages that conscience is a purely artificial product, as if that wasn't the very wonder of it. What odds whether it is the thing or the aptitude that is innate? What race of beasts ever got one up in all their leisurely æons?

Our spring is very cold and backward, though peaches, pears, and cherries are grudgingly blooming. I hope yours is more generous, for I think May sovereign for an inward wound. I can't recollect whether you know the Gurneys, who are now in London. If not, I must have given them a letter. You will like them in every way. They are delighted with dear Old England.

Always affectionately yours,

J. R. Lowell.

TO MISS NORTON

Elmwood, July 3, 1876.

. . . What can I tell you about Cincinnati? The journey impressed me, as a journey in America always does, with the wonderful richness and comfort of the country, and with the distinctive Americanism that is moulding into one type of feature and habits so many races that had widely diverged from the same original stock. Is the West to reproduce the primitive Aryan who wandered out of the East so long ago? One gets also an impression of size which enables one to sympathize with his countrymen (as I love to do) in the mere bigness of the country. These immense spaces, tremulous with the young grain, trophies of individual, or at any rate of unorganized courage and energy, of the people and not of dynasties, were to me inexpressibly impressive and even touching. The whole landscape had a neighborly air, such as I feel in no other country. The men who have done and are doing these things know how things *should be* done, and will find some way, I am sure, of bringing the country back to business principles. It was very interesting, also, to meet men from Kansas and Nevada and California, to see how manly and intelligent they were, and especially what large heads they had. They had not the manners of Vere de Vere, perhaps, but they had an independence and self-respect which are the prime element of fine bearing. I think I never (not even in Germany) sat at meat with so many men who used their knives as shovels, nor with so many who were so quiet and self-restrained in their demeanor. The Western-

ers, especially, may be Grangers, or what you will (it won't be the first case in history where self-interest has blinded men to the rights of others—nor the last), but you feel that they have the unmistakable makings of *men* in them. They were less sensitive to the offences of Blaine than I could have wished, but I suspect that few of our Boston men who have had to do with Western railways have been more scrupulous. I rather think they set the example of tempting legislators with the hope of questionable gains.

I am glad you liked Stephen's article as well as I did. It seems to me, on the whole, the best thing I have read about Macaulay, doing more justice than the rest to the essential manliness and Britishism of his character. Morley's paper seemed to me altogether too *a priori* and Teutonically abstruse. He was so profound that he dug under his subject rather than into it, and I confess the universe is so brutally indifferent to *us*, that I am not greatly interested in the discussion of any particular man's relation to it. That very small arc of which the eye of man (however tall) can grasp is enough for me. . . .

TO MRS. ———

Elmwood, July 4, 1876.

. . . You must be beginning to think me the most inconstant of men to have left your last letter so long without an answer. But the explanation of it is simple enough, though women, I believe, are so wise as never to be satisfied with an explanation, because the need of



H.B. Hall, Jr.

J. G. Blaine

one can never be explained. I meant to have written to you from Cincinnati, whither I went in the hope of helping to get Mr. Bristow nominated as the Republican candidate. There, I thought, I should have plenty of spare time, and plenty of new and amusing things to tell you about. But I had no leisure, the weather was stewing hot, and I spent all the intervals of business in trying to make myself clean with a very stingy supply of water, for the blacks of their coal-smoke stick faster than the most scriptural brother. I was wholly demoralized by the unwonted color of my finger-nails, and kept my fists carefully doubled to hide them lest I should be mistaken for a partisan of ——, the dirtiness of whose hands seemed rather an argument in his favor with many. I had little hope before I went of Mr. Bristow's nomination, but desired it greatly because he had shown himself a practical reformer, and because I believed that a Kentucky candidate might at least give the starting-point for a party at the South whose line of division should be other than sectional, and by which the natural sympathy between reasonable and honest men at the North and the South should have a fair chance to reassert itself. We failed, but at least succeeded in preventing the nomination of a man whose success in the Convention (he would have been beaten disastrously at the polls) would have been a lesson to American youth that selfish partisanship is a set-off for vulgarity of character and obtuseness of moral sense. I am proud to say that it was New England that defeated the New England candidate.

I hope you are as far away from the noises of this

boisterous anniversary as I. I was asked to write an ode for the celebration at Taunton, where Mr. C. F. Adams is to deliver the oration. But the Muse was unwilling, and I would not condescend to the mechanical compromise of a hymn with verses set stiffly as pins in a paper, but, unlike them, of a non-conducting material. It is no use setting traps for inspiration till the right bait shall have been discovered. With the thermometer at 90° in the shade, I am, on the whole, glad I wasn't inspired.

Since you were here I have changed my quarters, and moved out of the library into the room in front of it, where a long window gives me more breeze, and where I shall have the morning sun in winter, which I crave more as I grow older. When you come again, I hope you will like me as well in my new refuge as in the old. But perhaps by this time my silence has vexed you enough to make you reconsider your good opinion of me altogether?

I am writing to cannon music, for the noon salutes are just booming in every direction, and with something of the effect of a general engagement. Women, I think, are quiet when they are happiest, and can stitch their superfluous exhilaration into a seam, but the coarser fibre of men demands an immense amount of noise to make it vibrate and convince them they are happy. Or is it that uproar deadens reflection, and that in the confusion they escape arrest by that consciousness of the futility of things in general which is so saddening? However it be, I am glad the nearest guns are a mile away from me. I remember

how, fifty years ago to-day, I, perched in a great ox-heart cherry-tree, long ago turned to mould, saw my father come home with the news of John Adams's death. I wish I could feel, as I did then, that we were a chosen people, with a still valid claim to divine interpositions. It is from an opposite quarter that most of our providences seem to come now. But those peaceful fields that rimmed the railway all the way to Cincinnati, trophies of honest toil, and somehow looking more neighborly than in other lands, were a great consolation and encouragement to me. Here was a great gain to the sum of human happiness, at least, however it be with the higher and nobler things that make a country truly inhabitable. Will they come in time, or is Democracy doomed by its very nature to a dead level of commonplace? At any rate, our experiment of inoculation with freedom is to run its course through all Christendom, with what result the wisest cannot predict. Will it only insure safety from the more dangerous disease of originality? . . .

TO THOMAS HUGHES

Elmwood, July 12, 1876.

Dear old Friend,— . . . I have taken my first practical dip into politics this summer, having been sent by my neighbors first to the State Convention and then to the National at Cincinnati. I am glad I went, for I learned a great deal that may be of service to me hereafter. You are wrong about Hayes; he was neither unknown nor even unexpected as a probable nominee.

He was not adopted as a compromise in any true sense of the word, but as an unimpeachably honest man, and the only one on whom we could unite to defeat Blaine, who had all the party machinery at his disposal. The nomination of the latter would have been a national calamity—the most costly tub of whitewash yet heard of. For, really, a large part of the feeling in his favor was an honest (though mistaken) feeling of indignation at a partisan persecution, for such he had cunningly contrived to make the inquiry into his stock-jobbing proceedings appear. His nomination might have done good in one way—by leading to the formation of a new party based simply on reform. Such a party would have been certainly formed, and I should not have regretted it, for I very much doubt the possibility of purifying either of the old ones from within. There is very little to choose between them; though, so far as the South is concerned, I rather sympathize with the Democrats. The whole condition of things at the South is shameful, and I am ready for a movement now to emancipate the whites. No doubt the government is bound to protect the misintelligence of the blacks, but surely not at the expense of the intelligence of the men of our own blood. The South, on the whole, has behaved better than I expected, but our extremists expect them to like being told once a week that they have been *licked.* The war was fought through for nationality; for that and nothing more. That was both the ostensible and the real motive. Emancipation was a very welcome incident of the war, and nothing more.

Ever since '65 the Republican party has done its best (I mean its leaders, for selfish ends) to make our victory nugatory, so far as Reunion was concerned. The people I believe to be perfectly sound, and as honest (if not more so) as any other on the earth. But it takes a great while for the people to have its way. There is a good deal of blundering at first, a good deal of righteous wrath that misses its mark, but in the long run we shall win.

I think the intelligence of the country is decidedly on the Republican side, and cannot quite get over my distrust of the Democracy, which is mainly to blame for our political corruption.

In England you are misled by your free-trade notions in your judgment of the two parties here. (I don't mean you personally.) Free trade has nothing to hope from either of them, and perhaps the most ardent free-traders are Republicans, but we shall have no free trade till our debt is cancelled.

Our real weak point is in Congress, and your zealous enlargers of the suffrage had better think twice. I think we shall gradually get better men, but it will be a slow business. I myself have been asked to stand in my district, but do not see my way clear to so very great a sacrifice. I am hopeful of purification, but not sanguine.

Emerson is well, but visibly aging. He was not at our Commencement this year, the first time I have ever missed him there. He is as sweetly high-minded as ever, and when one meets him the Fall of Adam seems a false report. Afterwards we feel of our throats,

and are startled by the tell-tale lump there. John Holmes is well, and delightful as usual. He is lame again just now, but it does not make him blue as formerly. I wish we could have you here again. We have a new veranda on the north side, which is a great success. (I enclose a print.) I had hoped for you during the Centennial year. We are taking it gravely, I am glad to see, and rather incline to be thoughtful than bumptious. I wish your queen (or empress) would have had the grace to write a letter. It would have done good, and we would rather have had one from her than from all your Wilhelms and Vittorio Emanueles together. . . .

Sept. 24, 1876.

P. S. You will see by the date of my other sheet that it was written more than two months ago. I wrote that I should enclose a print, and found that the magazine containing it had been given away. So that very day I ordered another of our periodical-dealer (as we call a newsman here) and he promised to get one at once, adding that he wished for a copy himself also, as it contained an article on Cambridge. At intervals ever since I have asked for it and never got it, but am always told by the merchant of news that he wants one himself. It tickles me as one of the last samples to be found of a certain Constantinopolitan way of doing business which used to be characteristic of the Cambridge of my boyhood.

Politics have not changed much since I wrote—only the worst element of the Republican party has got hold of the canvass, and everything possible is done to stir

up the old passions of the war. Of course I with all sensible men hate this, but our protest is drowned in the drums and trumpets of a presidential election. On the whole, I shall vote for Hayes, and the best judges think his election the likelier of the two. But there will be a strong reaction from the violences of the contest now going on, and Congress will be more in opposition with the executive than ever. The same thing will happen if Tilden comes in, for the Democratic party is very hungry for place, and their professions of reform will be severely tested. Now, as the good men of both parties are honest reformers, I think we shall gradually get an independent party, and then the country will divide on rational issues, such as currency and tariff. Faith in democratical forms of government will be painfully strained in many minds if Butler should carry eastern Massachusetts, as he probably will. I shall still think them, however, as nearly ideal as some other ways of doing clumsily what might be done well. It will go hard with me to vote against Mr. Adams here at home,* and perhaps, if things go on from bad to worse, I sha'n't. But I cannot easily bring myself to trust the Democrats. His nomination has had one odd (and good) effect here in dividing the Irish vote. The Fenians regard him as an enemy of Ireland, because he did his duty as ambassador, so the Irish Democratic orators are laboring to convince their countrymen that a man can't have two countries at once, though most of 'em see nothing

* Mr. Charles F. Adams, late U. S. Minister at the Court of St. James, was the candidate of the Democratic party for governor.

wonderful in Sir Boyle Roche's bird. If I ever get the print I will send it, for we are rather proud of our new veranda, which longingly awaits you. . . .

TO MISS NORTON

Elmwood, Aug. 6, 1876.

. . . You should see me in my new study, with the arches wide open into the library, as we shall call it. . . .

> Now can I taste the pleasures of retreat;
> Days loitering idly with snow-silent feet,
> Truants of Time, to-morrow like to-day,
> That come unbought, and claimless glide away
> By shelves that sun them in the indulgent Past,
> Where Ill hath ceased or turned to song at last.

Tell Charles that these verses are adapted from a poem I told him I was writing. And, lest I never finish them, I will copy a bit or two more:

> Oh, as this pensive moonlight blurs my pines
> (Here as I sit and meditate these lines)
> To gray-green dreams of what they are by day,
> So would some light, not reason's clear-edged ray,
> Trance me in moonshine, as before the blight
> Of years had brought the fatal gift of sight
> That sees things as they are, or will be soon,
> In the frank prose of undissembling noon!
>
> * * * * * *
>
> Are we not changed? Is this the Senate now
> Where Clay once flashed, and Webster's cloudy brow
> Brooded those bolts of thought that blazing flew,
> And whose long echoes all the horizon knew?

I think that will do for once. Tell Charles, also, that

copying the first passage brought back to my memory the inscription on a dial which I fished for vainly the other night. It is *Pereunt et imputantur.* The *Horas non numero nisi serenas* is epicurean, but this other is *gnomic,* and therefore more suitable to a sundial. . . .

By the way, don't translate *pereunt* (in the dial epigram) by *perish.* Any fool might do that. It has the literal meaning which we have lost. "They go by and are charged to our account," as I ought to know if anybody, for I have thrown away hours enough to have made a handsome reputation out of. I am an ass, but then I know it, and *that* kind (a rare species), though pastured on east wind and thistles like the rest, do yet wear their ears with a difference. . . .

TO W. D. HOWELLS

Elmwood, Aug. 9, 1876.

Dear Howells,—You are very kind to my verses, but I can stand it, especially as what you say applies to a much younger fellow than I, twenty years younger, in fact, and who had not yet been tripped up by a professor's gown. . . .

I have been trifling with foolish epigrams lately. Here is one I made last night as I lay awake:

A DIALOGUE.

"Jones owns a silver mine." "Pray, who is Jones?
Don't vex my ears with horrors like *Jones owns!*"
"Why, Jones is Senator, and so he strives
To make us buy his ingots all our lives

At a stiff premium on the market price:
A silver currency would be so nice!"
"What's Jones's plan?" "A coinage, to be sure,
To rise and fall with Wall Street's temperature.
You wish to treat the crowd: Your dollar shrinks
Undreamed percentums while they mix the drinks."
Jones' mine's quicksilver, then?" "Your wit won't pass;
"His coin's mercurial, but his mine is brass.
Jones owns"—"Again! Your iteration's worse
Than the slow torture of an echo-verse.
I'll tell you one thing Jones won't own: that is,
That the cat hid beneath the meal is his."

You see I am getting old. The compliment I paid you to-day is no sign of it, however. I had all your books catalogued with my library to-day. "Howells," said I to the young man who is doing the work for me, "is going to last. He knows how to write." If you notice the poetry from the *Harvard Advocate*, pat him on the back. His name is Woodberry, and his "Violet Crown" is a far cry beyond anything else in the volume. I hope the country air is doing lots of good to Mrs. Howells and the weans. As for you, you are already, like dear old Jemmy Thomson, more fat than bard beseems, though God knows you don't dwell in the Castle of Indolence. . . .

TO C. E. NORTON

Elmwood, Monday Night, Aug. 21, 1876.

. . . I received a deputation this evening to persuade me to reconsider my refusal to stand for Congress. They tell me I am the only candidate with whom the Republicans can carry the district, that they have thoroughly



Charles Sumner

CHARLES SUMNER

"Do not let the Civil Rights bill fail."

canvassed it and are sure that I should be elected without the need of any effort, that no one else could get the nomination against Claflin, but that I should have it by acclamation. I confess that I was profoundly touched by this testimony of my neighbors, but did not yield. They strove to make me see it as my duty, but I cannot. I will confess to you that I was never so surprised in my life, for I had not looked on my candidacy as serious. The members of this delegation were not even known to me by sight — except one, whom I remembered at our ward caucus. As Sumner said at our club, "This is *history*, and you had better listen to it!" (He was talking of himself.) I compare myself (*facendo questo gran rifiuto*) to Cæsar and Cromwell on a like occasion. . . .

TO MISS NORTON

Elmwood, Oct. 2, 1876.

. . . I have been again urged to stand for Congress (only yesterday), and again wisely declined. I beat Cæsar and Cromwell and the other historical examples, who only put aside the offered crown thrice, and this is my half-dozenth self-denial. The truth is, and I have frankly told 'em so, that I should not make half so good a member as they think. They think not, but I *know* it.

Term has begun, and I think I shall enjoy my classes. I begin in a more cheerful mood than usual, though rather in the dumps about politics, which have taken a turn all through the canvass much to my distaste, and now all this end of the State seems likely to be given over, by bargain and sale, into the hands of the regular

old set of corruptionists. Even in this district they mean to force on us as candidate for Congress the man who presided at a reception of Blaine the other night. I preserve my equanimity, but am losing my temper. . . .

. . . I trust your native air will set you on your feet again. There is nothing like it, I think, in spite of the strong taint of Butlerism just now. But think how many times the world has been ruined and got over it so bravely. I am more alarmed at what they say of the sun's cooling. It takes the very rowels from the spur of noble minds. For what is a beggarly twenty million of years? I lose all interest in literature. Let us write for immediate applause—and done with it. . . .

TO MRS. ———

Elmwood, Oct. 9, 1876.

Dear Mrs. ——,—I haven't been forgetting you all this while, but all kinds of preoccupations of one kind and another (including politics) have not conduced to the untrammelled mood of mind which is the main condition of agreeable letter-writing. I am worried about the turn the canvass has been taking, and while too full of traditional and well-founded doubts of the Democratic party to be a willing helper in the success of its candidates, an equal distrust of the present managers of the Republican party hinders me from giving any cordial support to that. Whichever way I look I see cause of reasonable anxiety, and since, as you know, I do not value even my own opinions till they are rooted in experience and have weathered the blasts of argument, I

am slow in making up my mind. About one thing I am settled, and that is that the reviving of old animosities for a temporary purpose (and that, too, a selfish one), the doing evil that a problematical good may come of it, is nothing short of wicked. The good hoped for is questionable and at best temporary, while the harm is of the most far-reaching consequence. We are deliberately trying to make an Ireland of the South, by perpetuating misgovernment there. Scotland, instead of being as now quite as loyal as any part of Britain, might easily have been made what Ireland is by the same treatment. I don't know whether the Mr. Lamar whose speech I have read be the friend of whom I have heard you speak, but if so, I congratulate you in having at least one friend who is both an able man and a wise one, if indeed the one quality do not necessarily imply the other.

I think I wrote to you about my change of quarters. I am in the front room now, with a bright October sun shining in on me as I write, and I dare say it was the sense of cheerfulness that reminded me of you, for we found you all sunshine while you were with us. When the sun gives out (as you awful scientific people tell us it will one of these days) I shall turn to you for a spare pinch of warmth now and then—if the catastrophe take place in my time. . . .

TO R. W. GILDER

Elmwood, Nov. 29, 1876.

. . . I have read the review of "Deirdré"* you were

* "Deirdré," a poem by the late Dr. R. D. Joyce.

good enough to send me, and think it kindly and discriminating. I read the poem in manuscript, and recommended it for publication on the ground of the freshness and force which gave it a sincere originality, in spite of an obvious external likeness to Morris. Of course I never spoke of it as I hear I have been represented as speaking. At my age one has no more extravagant opinions —or keeps them for his own amusement.

Thank you for the kind things you say of my ode. I value highly the sympathy of one who is qualified to judge and who works in the same spirit in which I try to work, though in a different line. . . .

TO LESLIE STEPHEN

Elmwood, Dec. 4, 1876.

. . . I have received your book* and hasten to thank you for it—not, however, before reading it with the attention it deserves. I thank you also for the Crabbe, for which I must be indebted to somebody in good shillings and pence, but no bill came with it. Will you kindly find out for me what I owe and to whom? Your book interested me profoundly and instructed me as much as it interested. . . . Yet I was conscious of you (and this was very pleasant) all the while I read. Some of your *obiter dicta* tickled me immensely by their wit and keenness. How the deuce you read all those books and escaped to tell us of 'em is a conundrum I shall carry unsolved to my grave. I am very much in the state of mind of the Bretons who revolted against the

* "English Thought in the Eighteenth Century."

Revolutionary Government and wrote upon their banners, "Give us back our God!" I suppose I am an intuitionalist, and there I mean to stick. I accept the challenge of common-sense and claim to have another faculty, as I should insist that a peony was red, though twenty color-blind men denied it. Your book has fortified me, and one thing in it constantly touched me, namely, that, whatever your belief, and whatever proof you ask before believing, you show much tenderness for whatever is high-minded and sincere, even where you think it mistaken. About most things, I am happy to think, we are agreed. . . .

I sat down to write this letter in entire peace of mind, but had hardly begun it when in came a reporter to "interview" me as one of the presidential electors of Massachusetts, and at intervals since three others have presented themselves. There was a rumor, it seems, that I was going to vote for Tilden. But, in my own judgment, I have no choice, and am bound in honor to vote for Hayes, as the people who chose me expected me to do. They did not choose me because they had confidence in my judgment, but because they thought they knew what that judgment would be. If I had told them that I should vote for Tilden, they would never have nominated me. It is a plain question of trust. The provoking part of it is that I tried to escape nomination all I could, and only did not decline because I thought it would be making too much fuss over a trifle. . . .

VIII

1877–1880

VISIT TO BALTIMORE.—APPOINTED MINISTER TO SPAIN.—LIFE IN MADRID.—JOURNEY IN SOUTHERN FRANCE.—VISIT TO ATHENS AND CONSTANTINOPLE.—ILLNESS OF MRS. LOWELL.—TRANSFERRED TO LONDON.

LETTERS TO MRS. ——, J. B. THAYER, C. E. NORTON, F. J. CHILD, MISS NORTON, MRS. E. BURNETT, MISS GRACE NORTON, THOMAS HUGHES, H. W. LONGFELLOW, GEORGE PUTNAM, J. W. FIELD, MRS. W. E. DARWIN, LESLIE STEPHEN, R. W. GILDER.

TO MRS. ———

Elmwood, Jan. 14, 1877.

Dear Mrs. ——,—This morning I poured some ink for the first time into your pretty inkstand, and, as in duty bound, hansel it by writing to you. It has been standing on the shelf of my secretary, its mouth wide open with astonishment at my ingratitude in not writing to thank you, ever since it came. It needn't have been so jealous though, for I have written to nobody else meanwhile, and it should remember that I can at any moment shut it up tight, deny it ink, pen, and paper, and thus cut it off from all its friends. "Monster!" I seem to hear it say, "you would not surely deny me the sad consolation of sending my love to Mrs. —— and telling her how homesick I am? There are

all kinds of fine things in me, as good as were ever in any inkstand that ever lived, if you had but the wit to fish them out. If I had stayed with my dear mistress I should ere this have found a vent for my genius in a score of pleasant ways, but with you I fear lest I go to my grave an *encrier incompris!*" "Well, well, so long as you don't make me uneasy with your reproaches, I shall be sure to treat you kindly for the sake of your old mistress, . . . who is always contriving pleasant ways of making her friends grateful." . . .

I hope you maintain your tranquillity in this ferment of politics. I do, for, as I made up my mind deliberately, so I do not change it to please the first man I meet. As I consider the question of good government and prosperity in the Southern States the most pressing one, I voted for Mr. Hayes on the strength of his letter. I think it would be better for North and South if he were President. He would carry with him the better elements of the Republican party, and whatever its shortcomings (of which none is more bitterly conscious than I), the moral force of the North and West is with them and not with the Democrats. Above all, if Mr. Hayes should show a wise sympathy with the real wants and rights of the Southern whites (as I believe he would), it would be felt at the South to be a proof that the whole country was inclined to do them justice. From Mr. Tilden and the Democrats it would be received as a matter of course. You see what I mean? Of course I am not one of those who would have Mr. Hayes "counted in."

I shall have the pleasure of seeing you now in a few

weeks. We have decided that, on the whole, it is best that Mrs. Lowell should not come with me. We both regret it, but it is wise. Wisdom always has a savor of regret in it ever since Eve's time. We have been having a noble winter. The old fellow has been showing a little feebleness for a year or two, and we thought he had abdicated. But now he has grasped his icicle again and governs as well as reigns. The world looks like a lamb in its white fleece, but some of us know better.

Mrs. Lowell sends her love, and I wish you and yours many happy returns of the New Year. Unhappily it is generally the Old Year that comes back again. However, we all *play* it is the New, and that is something.

Good-by.

Affectionately yours,

J. R. Lowell.

TO JAMES B. THAYER

Elmwood, Jan. 14, 1877.

Dear Sir,—I am heartily thankful to you for your very encouraging note. I write verses now with as much inward delight as ever, but print them with less confidence. For poetry should be a continuous and controlling mood, the mind should be steeped in poetical associations, and the diction nourished on the purest store of the Attic bee, and from all these my necessary professional studies are alien. I think the "Old Elm" the best of the three,* mainly because it was composed

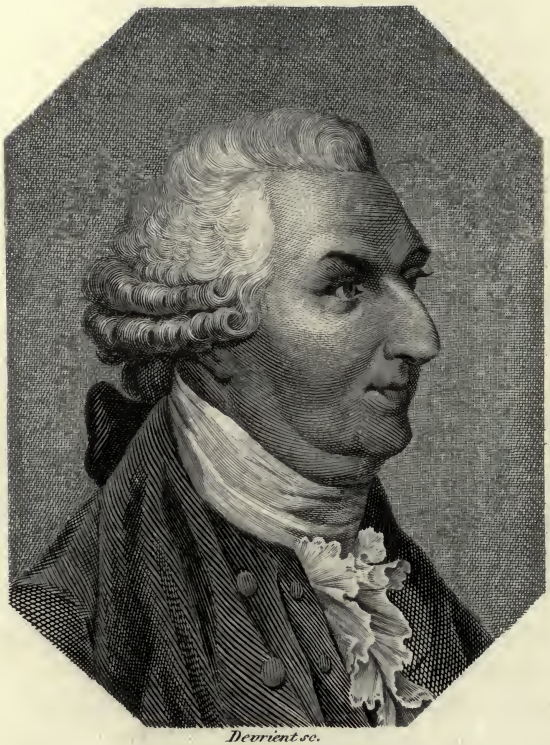
* Three Memorial Poems: "Ode read at the One Hundredth

after my college duties were over, though even in that I was distracted by the intervention of the Commencement dinner.

But what I wished to say a word to you about (since you are so generous in your judgment) is the measures I have chosen in these as well as the "Commemoration Ode." I am induced to this by reading in an article on Cowley copied into the *Living Age* from the *Cornhill* (and a very good article too, in the main) the following passage, "As lately as our own day" (*my* ear would require "*So* lately as," by the way) "Mr. Lowell's 'Commemoration Ode' is a specimen of the formless poem of unequal lines and broken stanzas supposed to be in the manner of Pindar, but truly the descendant of our royalist poet's 'majestick numbers.'" Now, whatever my other shortcomings (and they are plenty, as none knows better than I), want of reflection is not one of them. The poems were all intended for public recitation. That was the first thing to be considered. I suppose my ear (from long and painful practice on Φ. B. K. poems) has more technical experience in this than almost any. The least tedious measure is the rhymed heroic, but this, too, palls unless relieved by passages of wit or even mere fun. A long series of uniform stanzas (I am always speaking of public recitation) with regularly recurring rhymes produces somnolence among the men and a desperate resort to their fans on the part

Anniversary of the Fight at Concord Bridge, April 19, 1775"; "Under the Old Elm," poem read at Cambridge on the hundredth anniversary of Washington's taking command of the American army, July 3, 1775; an "Ode for the Fourth of July, 1876."

of the women. No method has yet been invented by which the train of thought or feeling can be shunted off from the epical to the lyrical track. My ears have been jolted often enough over the sleepers on such occasions to know that. I know *something* (of course an American can't know much) about Pindar. But *his* odes had the advantage of being chanted. Now, my problem was to contrive a measure which should not be tedious by uniformity, which should vary with varying moods, in which the transitions (including those of the voice) should be managed without jar. I at first thought of mixed rhymed and blank verses of unequal measures, like those in the choruses of "Samson Agonistes," which are in the main masterly. Of course, Milton *deliberately* departed from that stricter form of the Greek Chorus to which it was bound quite as much (I suspect) by the law of its musical accompaniment as by any sense of symmetry. I wrote some stanzas of the "Commemoration Ode" on this theory at first, leaving some verses without a rhyme to match. But my ear was better pleased when the rhyme, coming at a longer interval, as a far-off echo rather than instant reverberation, produced the same effect almost, and yet was grateful by unexpectedly recalling an association and faint reminiscence of consonance. I think I have succeeded pretty well, and if you try reading aloud I believe you would agree with me. The sentiment of the "Concord Ode" demanded a larger proportion of lyrical movements, of course, than the others. Harmony, without sacrifice of melody, was what I had mainly in view.



Devrient sc.

THOMAS GRAY.

Zwickau, b. d. Gebr. Schumann.

The *Cornhill* writer adds that "Keats, Shelley, and Swinburne, on the other hand, have restored to the ode its harmony and shapeliness." He and I have different notions of harmony. He evidently means uniformity of recurrence. It isn't true of Shelley, some of whose odes certainly were written on the Cowley model. All of Wordsworth's are, except the "Power of Sound" and the "Immortality," which is irregular, but whose cadences were learned of Gray. (Our critic, by the way, calls the latter, whose name he spells with an *e*, a "follower of Cowley." Gray's odes are regular.) Coleridge's are also Cowleian in form, I am pretty sure. But all these were written for the closet—and mine for recitation. I chose my measures with my ears open. So I did in writing the poem on Rob Shaw. That *is* regular because meant only to be read, and because also I thought it should have in the form of its stanza something of the formality of an epitaph.

Pardon me all this. But I could not help wishing to leave in friendly hands a protest against being thought a lazy rhymer who wrote in *numeris* that seem, but are not, *lege solutis*, because it was easier. It isn't easier, if it be done well, that is, if it attain to a real and not a merely visual harmony of verse. The mind should be rhymed to, as well as the ear and eye. *Mere* uniformity gives the columns and wings and things of Herbert and Quarles. If I had had more time to mull over my staves they would have been better.

Gratefully yours,

J. R. Lowell.

TO C. E. NORTON

Baltimore,* Feb. 18, 1877.

. . . It happened that Judge Brown spoke of a letter he had received recommending somebody for the Professorship of Philosophy here. This gave Child a chance to speak of —— (Judge Brown is one of the trustees of the Johns Hopkins), which he did as excellently well as he lectures on Chaucer and reads him, and that is saying a great deal. You lost, by the way, a very great pleasure in not hearing him read the Nonnes Prestes tale. I certainly never heard anything better. He wound into the meaning of it (as Dr. Johnson says of Burke) like a serpent, or perhaps I should come nearer to it if I said that he injected the veins of the poem with his own sympathetic humor till it seemed to live again. I could see his hearers take the fun before it came, their faces lighting with the reflection of his. I never saw anything better done. I wish I could inspire myself with his example, but I continue dejected and lumpish. . . .

Child goes on winning all ears and hearts. I am rejoiced to have this chance of seeing so much of him, for though I loved him before, I did not know *how* lovable he was till this intimacy. . . .

TO MISS NORTON

"Bahltimer," Feb. 22, 1877.

. . . We have just come back from celebrating our

* This visit to Baltimore was for the purpose of giving a course of lectures on Poetry at Johns Hopkins University.

Johns Hopkins Commemoration, and I came home bringing my sheaf with me in the shape of a lovely bouquet (I mean nosegay) sent me by a dear old Quaker lady who remembered that it was my birthday. We had first a very excellent address by *our* President Gilman, then one by Professor Gildersleeve on Classical Studies, and by Professor Silvester on the Study of Mathematics, both of them very good and just enough spiced with the personality of the speaker to be taking. Then I, by special request, read a part of my Cambridge Elm poem, and actually drew tears from the eyes of bitter secessionists—comparable with those iron ones that rattled down Pluto's cheek. I didn't quite like to read the invocation to Virginia here—I was willing enough three or four hundred miles north —but I think it did good. Teakle Wallace (Charles will tell you who he is), a prisoner of Fort Warren, came up to thank me with dry eyes (which he and others assured me had been flooded), and Judge Brown with the testifying drops still on his lids.

Silvester paid a charming compliment to Child, and so did Gildersleeve. The former said that he (C.) had invented a new pleasure for them in his reading of Chaucer, and G., that you almost saw the dimple of Chaucer's own smile as his reading felt out the humor of the verse. The house responded cordially. If I had much vanity I should be awfully cross, but I am happy to say that I have enjoyed dear Child's four weeks' triumph (of which he alone is unconscious) to the last laurel-leaf. He is *such* a delightful creature. I never saw so much of him before, and should be

glad I came here if it were for [nothing but] my nearer knowledge and enjoyment of *him*.

We are overwhelmed with kindness here. I feel very much as an elderly oyster might who was suddenly whisked away into a polka by an electric eel. How I shall ever do for a consistent hermit again Heaven only knows. I eat five meals a day, as on board a Cunarder on the mid-ocean, and on the whole bear it pretty well, especially now that there are only four lectures left. I shall see you I hope in a week from to-morrow. Going away from home, I find, does not tend to make us *under*value those we left behind. . . .

Your affectionate old friend,

J. R. L.

TO MRS. E. BURNETT

Elmwood, June 5, 1877.

. . . It must be kept close, but I have refused to go either to Vienna or Berlin. Indeed I have no desire to go abroad at all. But I had said that "I would have gone to Spain," supposing that place to have been already filled. But on Saturday I saw Mr. Evarts (by his request) at the Revere House, who told me that the President was much disappointed by my refusal. He (Mr. Evarts) thought it possible that an exchange might be made, in which case I shall have to go. It will be of some use to me in my studies, and I shall not stay very long at any rate. But it is hard to leave Elmwood while it is looking so lovely. The canker-worms have burned up all my elms and apple-trees, to be sure, but everything else is as fresh as Eden. I tried

troughs and kerosene round the two elms near the house and they are not wholly consumed, but are bad enough. The crow blackbirds, after prospecting two years, have settled in the pines and make the view from the veranda all the livelier. It is a very birdy year for some reason or other. I can't explain it, but there is a great difference in the *volatility* (as Dr. Hosmer would have said) of the seasons. . . .

TO MISS GRACE NORTON

Elmwood, July 1, 1877.

. . . We have been having a very busy week as you know. The President's visit was really most successful, so far as the impression made by him went. He seemed to me simple and earnest, and I can't think that a man who has had five horses killed under him will be turned back by a little political discomfort. He has a better head than the photographs give him, and the expression of the eyes is more tender. I was on my guard against the influence which great opportunities almost always bring to bear on us in making us insensibly transfer to the man a part of the greatness that belongs to the place. . . . Mrs. Hayes also pleased me very much. She has really beautiful eyes, full of feeling and intelligence, and bore herself with a simple good-humor that was perfectly well-bred. A very good American kind of princess, I thought. Don't fancy I am taken off my feet by the enthusiasm of contagion. You know I am only too fastidious, and am too apt to be put at a disadvantage by the impar-

tiality of my eyes. No, I am sure that both the President and his wife have in them that excellent new thing we call Americanism, which I suppose is that "dignity of human nature" which the philosophers of the last century were always seeking and never finding, and which, after all, consists, perhaps, in not thinking yourself either better or worse than your neighbors by reason of any artificial distinction. As I sat behind them at the concert the other night, I was profoundly touched by the feeling of this kingship without mantle and crown from the property-room of the old world. Their dignity was in their very neighborliness, instead of in their distance, as in Europe. . . .

You must remember that I am "H. E." now myself, and can show a letter with that superscription. I haven't yet discovered in what my particular kind of excellency consists, but when I do I will let you know. It is rather amusing, by the way, to see a certain added respect in the demeanor of my fellow-townsmen towards me, as if I had drawn a prize in the lottery and was somebody at last. Indeed, I don't believe I could persuade any except my old friends of the reluctance with which I go. I dare say I shall enjoy it after I get there, but at present it is altogether a bore to be honorabled at every turn. The world is a droll affair. And yet, between ourselves, dear Grace, I should be pleased if my father could see me in capitals on the Triennial Catalogue.* You remember Johnson's pathetic letter

* The triennial (now quinquennial) catalogue of the graduates of Harvard College; now, since Harvard has grown to a University, deprived alike of the dignity of its traditional Latin and

to Chesterfield. How often I think of it as I grow older! . . .

TO THOMAS HUGHES

Elmwood, July 2, 1877.

. . . I should have written to you at once, when I finally made up my mind to go to Madrid, but that I heard of the death of Mrs. Senior. Just after this I lost one of my oldest and dearest friends in Jane Norton, and then went Edmund Quincy, an intimate of more than thirty years, at a moment's warning. I had always reckoned on their both surviving me (though Quincy was eleven years my elder), for they both came of long-lived races. Of Mrs. Senior I have a most delightful remembrance when we rowed together on the Thames, and she sang "Sally in our Alley" and "Wapping Old Stairs" in a voice that gave more than Italian sweetness to English words. I thought that her sympathy with the poor, and her habit of speaking with them, had helped to give this sweetness to her voice. If heaven were a place where it was all singing, as our Puritan forebears seem to have thought, the desire to hear that voice again would make one more eager to get there. I was in a very gloomy mood for a week or two, and didn't like to write. There is no consolation in such cases, for not only the heart refuses to be comforted, but the eyes also have a hunger which can never be stilled in this world. . . .

of those capitals in which the sons of hers who had attained to public official distinction such as that of Member of Congress, or Governor of a State, or Judge of a U. S. Court, were elevated above their fellow-students. To have one's name in capitals in the catalogue was a reward worth achieving.

TO MISS GRACE NORTON

Grosvenor Hotel, Park Street,
London, July 29, 1877.

. . . I have just come in from Hyde Park, whither I go to smoke my cigar after breakfast. The day is as fine as they can make 'em in London: the sun shines and the air is meadowy. I sat and watched the sheep crawl through the filmy distance, unreal as in a pastoral of the last century, as if they might have walked out of a London eclogue of Gay. Fancy saw them watched by beribboned shepherdesses and swains. Now and then a scarlet coat would cross my eye like a stain of blood on the innocent green. The trees lifted their cumulous outlines like clouds, and all around was the ceaseless hum of wheels that never sleep. . . . This scene in the Park is one of which I never tire. I like it better than anything in London. If I look westward I am in the country. If I turn about, there is the never-ebbing stream of coaches and walkers, the latter with more violent contrasts of costume and condition than are to be seen anywhere else, and with oddities of face and figure that make Dickens seem no caricaturist. The landscape has the quiet far-offness of Chaucer. The town is still the town of Johnson's London. . . .

TO THE SAME

Hôtel de Lorraine, 7 Rue de Beaune,
Paris, Aug. 8, 1877.

. . . Here we are in the same little hotel in which you left us five years ago, and I never walk out but I

meet with scenes and objects associated with you. It is the same Paris, and more than ever strikes me as the handsomest city in the world. I find nothing comparable to the view up and down the river, or to the liveliness of its streets. At night the river with its reflected lights, its tiny *bateaux mouches* with their ferret eyes, creeping stealthily along as if in search of prey, and the dimly outlined masses of building that wall it in, gives me endless pleasure. I am as fond as ever of the perpetual torchlight procession of the avenue of the *Champs Elysées* in the evening, and the *cafés chantants* are more like the Arabian Nights than ever. I am pleased, too, as before with the amiable ways and caressing tones of the French women—the little girl who waits on us at breakfast treats us exactly as if we were two babies of whom she had the charge—and with the universal courtesy of the men. I am struck with the fondness of the French for pets, and their kindness to them. Some Frenchman (I forget who) has remarked this, and contrasted it with their savage cruelty towards their own race. I think, nevertheless, that it indicates a real gentleness of disposition. The little woman at the kiosque where I buy my newspapers asked me at once (as does everybody else) after John Holmes. (She had a tame sparrow he used to bring cake to.) "Ah!" exclaimed she, "*qu'il était bon! Tout bon! Ce n'est que les bons qui aiment les animaux! Et ce monsieur, comment il les aimait!*" . . .

TO GEORGE PUTNAM

Hôtel de Paris, Madrid,
Thursday, Aug. 16, 1877.

. . . We are obliged to go about somewhat in the heat of the day house-hunting. We can't go in a cab like ordinary mortals, but must have coachman and footman in livery, with their coats folded over the coach-box in a cascade of brass buttons. The first day it rather amused me, but yesterday the whole thing revealed itself to me as a tremendous bore—but essential to the situation. *Tu l'as voulu, Georges Dandin!* There are moments when I feel that I have sold my soul to the D—l. I am writing post-haste now because this leathern inconveniency will be at the door in half an hour, and I must find work for it or— . . .

TO MRS. EDWARD BURNETT

Legacion de los Estados Unidos
de America en España. Aug. 24, 1877.

. . . We arrived here on Tuesday, the 14th, and on Friday, the 17th, I started with Mr. Adee (the late chargé-d'affaires here) for La Granja. This is a summer palace of the king, about fifty miles from Madrid, among the mountains. You go about half the distance (to Villalba) by rail, and there we found awaiting us the private travelling-carriage of the prime minister, which had been very courteously put at our disposal. Our journey was by night and over the mountains, the greatest height reached by the road being about that of Mt. Washington. Eight mules with red plumes and other

gorgeous trappings formed our team. A *guardia civil*, with three-cornered hat, white cross-belts, and rifle, mounted the rumble, and with a cracking of whips quite as noisy as a skirmish of revolvers in Virginia City, and much shouting, away we pelted. After crossing the pass and beginning to go down-hill the road was very picturesque, through a great forest of heavy-needled pines whose boughs, lighted up by our lamps, were like heavy heaps of smoke in a still air. We reached La Granja at midnight, beating the *diligence* by more than an hour. Our rooms at the only inn had been engaged by telegraph, so we supped and to bed. The next morning the second Introducer of Ambassadors (the first was at the sea-shore) came to make arrangements for my official reception and Mr. Adee's (late Chargé) audience of leave. The introducer was in a great stew (for he had never tried his hand before), and made us at least six visits, to repeat the same thing in the course of the forenoon. At ten minutes before two a couple of royal coaches arrived, the first for Mr. Adee and the second (more gorgeous) for me. Mounted guards, with three-cornered hats and jack-boots, looking like the pictures of Dumas *père's* mousquetaires, rode on each side in files. The introducer, blazing with gold and orders, sat on my right, and we started at a foot-pace for the palace, about a hundred yards away. The troops and band saluted as we passed, and alighting, we were escorted through long suites of rooms to the royal presence. There I found the king, with as many of the court dignitaries as were at La Granja, in a long semi-circle, his majesty in the middle. I made one bow at

the door, a second midway, and a third on facing the king. I made my speech in English, he answered me in Spanish, then came forward and exchanged a few compliments with me in French, and all was over. Then I was taken to another wing of the palace to pay my respects to the Princess of the Asturias, the king's sister. Next morning (Sunday, 19th) we breakfasted *en famille* with Señor Silvela, Minister of State. At two the Duke of Montpensier (just arrived) held a reception in my honor. All the diplomats at La Granja sat in a circle. At the end of the room farthest from the door sat the duke and duchess, with an empty chair between them to which I was conducted. After five minutes of infantile conversation the duke rose and the thing was over. At five some of the *grandes eaux* in the garden were played for Uncle Sam. It was a pretty and picturesque sight. The princesses and their ladies walked in front abreast, followed by the king, his household, and foreign ministers. I was beckoned to the king's side, and he talked with me all the way—even quoting one of my own verses. He had been crammed, of course, beforehand. The waters were very pretty, and the garden, set as it is in a ring of mountains, far finer than Versailles. At eight o'clock dinner at the palace, where I sat on the left of the Princess of Asturias, the Duke of Montpensier being on her right, and the king opposite. The king, by the way, is smallish (he is not nineteen), but has a great deal of *presence*, is very intelligent and good-looking. So young a monarch in so difficult a position interests me. The same night, at two o'clock, we started for Madrid. . . .

TO H. W. LONGFELLOW

Madrid, Nov. 17, 1877.

Dear Longfellow,—I have just had a visit from Sñr. D. Manuel Tamayo y Baus, secretario perpetuo de la Real Academia Española, who came to tell me that they had just elected you a foreign member of their venerable body. When your name was proposed, he says, there was a contest as to who should second the nomination, "*porque tiene muchos apasionados aquí el Señor Longfellow*," and at last the privilege was conceded to the Excmo. Sñr. D. Juan Valera, whose literary eminence is no doubt known to you. You may conceive how pleasant it was to hear all this, and likewise your name pronounced perfectly well by a Spaniard. Among all your laurels this leaf will not make much of a show, but I am sure you will value it for early association's sake, if for nothing more. I told the Sñr. Secretary that one of your latest poems had recorded your delightful memories of Spain.

It made me feel nearer home to talk about you, and I add that to the many debts of friendship I owe you. I wish I could walk along your front walk and drop into your study for a minute. However, I shall find you there when I come back, for you looked younger than ever when I bade you good-by. (I forgot to say that your *diploma* will be sent to me in a few days, and that I shall take care that you receive it in good time.)

I have had a good deal of *Heimweh* since I got here, and a fierce attack of gout, first in one foot and then in the other. I am all right again now, and the November

weather here (out of doors) is beyond any I ever saw. It beats Italy. And such limpidity of sky! Within doors it is chilly enough, and one needs a fire on the shady side of the house.

I have made few save diplomatic and official acquaintances thus far—very pleasant—but I miss my old friendships. But I don't know how many times I have said to myself, "*Tu l'as voulu, Georges Dandin, tu l'as voulu!*"

Keep me freshly remembered in your household, to the whole of which I send my love. Eheu!

Good-by. God bless and keep you!

Your affectionate friend,

J. R. Lowell.

TO GEORGE PUTNAM

Madrid, Dec. 23, 1877.

Dear Putnam,— . . . You talk jauntily of journeys to Granada and the like! You've no notion how much there is to do here. My secretary, who was eight years in the State Department, says it is the hardest-worked legation of all. I am getting used to it, though I shall never like it, I think, for I am too old to find the ceremonial parts even amusing. They bore me. Then I had seven weeks of gout before I had learned to take my work easily, and I worried myself abominably over it. 'Tis a vile thing to have a conscience! But fancy a shy man, without experience, suddenly plumped down among a lot of utter strangers, unable to speak their language (though knowing more of it than almost any of them), and with a secretary wholly ignorant both of Spanish and French. (An excellent fellow, by the way, whom I like very

much, and whose knowledge of official routine has been a great help.) And I was to get an indemnity out of them! It was rather trying, and I feared seriously at one time while I was shut up would affect my brain—for what with gout and anxiety I sometimes got no sleep for three days together. However, the gout let go its hold of my right foot just long enough for me to hobble with a cane and finish my indemnity job, and then went over into my left and pulled me down again.

From the first, however, I insisted on transacting all my business with the Secretary of State in Spanish, and now I get along very well, going to an interview with him quite at my ease. The offices of the legation are a mile from my house, and I have been there every day during office hours except when I was jugged with the gout. I hope to see Granada in the spring.

Next month we shall have prodigious doings with the king's wedding—such as could not be seen anywhere else, I fancy, in these days—for they purposely keep up or restore old fashions here, and have still a touch of the East in them so far as a liking for pomp goes. I like the Spaniards very well so far as I know them, and have an instinctive sympathy with their want of aptitude for business. My duties bring me into not the most agreeable relation with them, for I am generally obliged to play the *dun*, and sometimes for claims in whose justice I have not the most entire confidence. Even with the best will in the world, Spain finds it very hard to raise money. Fancy how we should have felt if a lot of South Carolinians during our Civil War could have got themselves naturalized in Spain, and then (not without

suspicion of having given aid and comfort to the enemy) should have brought in claims for damage to their estates by the Union Army! I think they would have had to wait awhile! . . .

TO THE SAME

Madrid, Jan. 28, 1878.

. . . We are just getting done with the festivals incident to the king's marriage, to the great relief of everybody concerned. The display, in certain respects, has been such as could be seen nowhere out of Spain, but the fatigue and row have been almost unendurable. I had just had two more of those dreadful attacks in the stomach to which I have been liable for the last few years, one on Tuesday, and a second still worse on Saturday—so bad, indeed, that I really thought something was going to happen that would drive the legation to black wax. Ether was of no avail, but on Sunday my feet began to swell and the stomach was relieved. I was forced to keep my bed for ten days. I am now all right again, except that I have to wear cloth shoes and cannot do any walking. But I took such care that I was able to show myself at the more important ceremonies. I never saw a crowd before, and one night, on my way to a reception at the prime minister's, I was nearly mobbed (that is, my carriage was), and so were several other foreign ministers. We were obliged to go round by a back street—the mob being furious, and I don't blame them.

The most interesting part of the ceremonies, on the

whole, was the dances of peasants from the different provinces of Spain before the king yesterday morning. It took place in the *plaza de armas* before the palace, and afterwards they were all brought up and ranged in a row for our inspection. The costumes were marvellous, and we could never have otherwise had such a chance to see so many and so good. In the evening the king dined the diplomatic body, and afterwards held a grand reception. The uniforms (there are six special embassies here with very long tails) and diamonds were very brilliant. But to me, I confess, it is all vanity and vexation of spirit. I like America better every day. . . .

TO MISS GRACE NORTON

Madrid, March 7, 1878.

. . . I don't care where the notion of immortality came from. If it sprang out of a controlling necessity of our nature, some instinct of self-protection and preservation, like the color of some of Darwin's butterflies, at any rate it is there and as real as that, and I mean to hold it fast. Suppose we don't *know*, how much *do* we know after all? There are times when one doubts his own identity, even his own material entity, even the solidity of the very earth on which he walks. One night, the last time I was ill, I lost all consciousness of my flesh. I was dispersed through space in some inconceivable fashion, and mixed with the Milky Way. It was with great labor that I gathered myself again and brought myself within compatible limits, or so it

seemed; and yet the very fact that I had a confused consciousness all the while of the Milky Way as something to be mingled with proved that *I* was there as much an individual as ever. . . .

TO JOHN W. FIELD

7 Cuesta de Sto. Domingo,
March 14, 1878.

. . . Thanks, too, for the *République Française*. The article amused me. Devotion to money quotha! The next minute these Johnny Crapauds will turn round and say, " Was there ever anything like us? See how we paid the German indemnity, and all out of our old stockings—the savings of years." The donkeys! You can raise more money for public purposes by subscription in a Boston week than in a French twelvemonth. *That's* not the weak point of democracy, whatever else may be. And in Gambetta's paper, too! What has been the strength of his Jewish ancestors and what is the strength of his Jewish cousins, I should like to know! That they could always supply you or me with an accommodation at heavy interest. Where would a Jew be among a society of primitive men without pockets, and therefore *a fortiori* without a hole in them? . . .

TO GEORGE PUTNAM

Madrid, March 16, 1878.

. . . What I meant by my not blaming the crowd that night was that the whole street from one end to t'other was so crammed with people that a carriage passing through really endangered life or limb. I in-

tended no communistic sentiment, but, though I am one of those who go in chariots for the nonce, I confess that my sympathies are very much with those who don't. Communism seems to have migrated to your side of the water just now. But I confess I feel no great alarm; for if history has taught us any other lesson than that nobody ever profits by its teachings, it is that property is always too much for communism in the long run. Even despite the Silver Bill, I continue to think pretty well of my country, God be praised! . . .

TO H. W. LONGFELLOW

Madrid, March 16, 1878.

Dear Longfellow,—I meant to have sent the diploma by Field, but as it was locked up in our safe at the Legation (I don't live there), I forgot it. I sent it yesterday to Paris by Mr. Dabney, our consul at the Canaries, who will deliver it to Ernest, and he will soon find a safe hand by whom to send it home. I am charmed with your simple Old Cambridge notion of our despatch-bags. God knows we have despatches enough to write, but we have only one bag, which we use only when we have reason to send a special courier to London, and the last one we sent left it behind him, so that we are bagless as Judas when he hanged himself (Old Play). I couldn't send the diploma, accordingly, with our regular despatches without folding it, which would have disfigured it abominably; and meanwhile you are as much an academician as if you had it, though I hope still young enough to wish to hold it in your own hand. By the

way, the *Académicos de Número* are entitled to wear a gorgeous decoration round the neck. If it had been that I shouldn't wonder at your feeling a little anxious, for if I hadn't stolen it I should have wondered, like Clive, at my own moderation.

Thank you for the poem, which Mrs. Lowell and I enjoyed together, and is so characteristic "that every line doth almost read your name." I should have known it everywhere, and liked it very much—all the more that it convinced me you were as young as ever and with no abatement of natural force.

The forsythia is already in bloom here, and the almond-trees were three weeks ago. The leaves are peeping. And yet to-day it is really cold again, and I suppose there was a fall of snow on the Guadarramas last night, for it was tumultuous with wind. It is a queer climate —the loveliest I ever saw—and yet it sticks you from behind corners, as we used to think Spaniards employed all their time in doing. After all, Cambridge is best.

My love and best wishes on your latest birthday (I was going to write "last," and superstitiously refrained my pen). I won't read the milestone, but I am sure it is on a road that leads to something better. Two countrymen interrupt me, and I end with love from your

Affectionate

J. R. Lowell.

TO F. J. CHILD

Madrid, Palm Sunday, April 14, 1878.

Dear Ciarli,*—I have noticed that Class and Phi Beta

* "Ciarli" was the attempt of an old Italian beggar at Professor Child's name.

poems almost always begin with an "as"—at any rate, they used to in my time, before a certain Boylston professor took 'em in hand. E. g.,

> As the last splendors of expiring day
> Round Stoughton's chimneys cast a lingering ray,
> So——

And sometimes there was a whole flight of *as*-es leading up to the landing of a final *so*, where one could take breath and reflect on what he had gone through. Now you will be sure that I didn't mean to begin my letter thus, but it was put into my head by the earthquake you have been making in Baltimore, the wave from which rolled all the way across the ocean and splashed audibly on these distant shores, and as all my associations are with dear Old Cambridge, why naturally I found myself murmuring,

> As, when the Earthquake stomps his angry foot,
> A thousand leagues the frightened billows scoot,
> So when my Ciarli, etc.

I was delighted to hear of it, though it was just what I expected, for didn't my little bark attendant sail more than a year ago? It gave me a touch of homesickness too, for I look back on that month as one of the pleasantest of my life, and here I am not as who should say altogether and precisely happy. Yet I hope to get something out of it that will tell by and by. The ceremonial, of which there is plenty, of course is naught, and I make acquaintance so slowly that I hardly know anybody (except officially) even yet, but I have at last got hold of an intelligent bookseller, and am beginning

to get a few books about me. . . . Gayangos has some exquisite old books, by the way—a Góngora, among others, that would have tempted me to ruin had it been for sale. It is a manuscript on vellum, made as a present to the Conde-duque de Olivares when he was in the flush of his *privanza*. Each poem is dated on the margin, and in the index the copyist marks certain ones as falsely attributed to Góngora, and says the poet told him so himself. It is exquisitely done, like that little Greek book in Mr. Sibley's show-case—Anacreon, isn't it?

I have just succeeded in getting a copy of the series printed for the *Bibliofilos Españoles*, which is very hard to come at, and cost me $105 in paper. It contains one or two things worth having—but I bought mainly with a view to the College Library one of these days. I have also bought the photolithographie of Cuesta's *editio princeps* of "Don Quixote" for the sake of Hartzenbusch's notes, which, by the way, show a singular dulness of perception, and *correct* Cervantes in a way that makes me swear. But they are worth having, as showing the emendations that have been made or proposed, the *when* and *by whom*. I have, too, the Burgos 1593 *Crónica* of the Cid, a very fair copy, and Damas-Hinard's edition of the *Poem*. . . .

I fear what you say of my being thrown away here may turn out true. There is a great deal to do, and of a kind for which I cannot get up a very sincere interest —claims and customs duties, and even, God save the mark! Brandreth's pills. I try to do my duty, but feel sorely the responsibility to people three thousand miles

away, who know not Joseph and probably think him unpractical. . . .

. . . We have seen Seville, Cordova, Granada, and Toledo, each excellent in itself and Toledo queer, even after Italy and Sicily. But the *shrinkage* is frightful. Toledo especially is full of ruin, and, what is worse, of indifference to ruin. Yet there is something oriental in my own nature which sympathizes with this "let her slide" temper of the *hidalgos*. They go through all the forms of business as they do of religion, without any reference to the thing itself, just as they offer you their house (dating their notes to you *de* SU *casa*) and everything in it. But they are very friendly, and willing to be helpful where they can. I love the jauds for a' that. They are unenterprising and unchangeable. The latest accounts of them are just like the earliest, and they have a firm faith in Dr. Mañana—he will cure everything, or, if he can't, it doesn't signify. In short, there is a flavor of Old Cambridge about 'em, as O. C. used to be when I was young and the world worth having. . . .

Good-by, dear old fellow.

Your affectionate

J. R. L.

TO C. E. NORTON

7 Cuesta de Sto. Domingo, 2°, izq^{a}.
(second floor, left-hand door),
April 15, 1878.

. . . I write now because I am going away for two months and haven't time to write at all. Whither we shall go I hardly can tell. I have a furlough of sixty

days, and am going first into southern France to see Toulouse and Carcassonne, which I never saw. Then I think we shall go to Genoa and Pisa, staying some little time, perhaps, in the *vituperio delle genti.* Then we may go on to Naples, take the steamer there, and be carried round to Athens. I am obliged to take my vacation now, to bring it within the year. My heart is as heavy as dough, so does the thought of travel always depress me. I don't know how I can come to grief—but am sure I shall always.

I believe I have performed my functions here tolerably well, except those of society, and even those I have not wholly neglected. I have been out a great deal—for *me.* The hours here are frightfully late. They go to a reception *after* the opera, so that half-past 11 is early. At a dance they are more punctual, and I have even known them to begin at 10—but they keep it up till 2 or 3. They seem childishly fond of dancing. But there is no such thing as conversation, nor any chance for it. As for scholarship, there is, I should say, very little of it, in the accurate German sense. I don't think they value it any more than they do time, of which they always have more on their hands than they know what to do with, and therefore vastly less than they want.

My own time has been very much broken up by my not being well. I think I told you that I have had three fits of gout since I came, and I *worry* over my duties. . . .

But I am learning something, I hope. I get along very well in Spanish now, and when I come back am

going to fasten an *abbé* to my skirts, so as to be forced into talking. I have tried in vain to find out for you whether there *are* any letters of Velasquez or not. What they call their *archives* have never been sorted. They don't know what they have. And then Simancas is ever so far away, and Government won't consent to have their documents brought to Madrid—nor even to Valladolid. There are local jealousies in the way—stronger even than ours. But next winter, when I am more familiar with things and men, I hope to do something. There are no scientific booksellers—not one—and I can't even procure what has been actually printed about Cervantes. I bought the other day the photolithographic copy of the first edition of "Don Quixote," for the sake, mainly, of Hartzenbusch's notes. But they are mostly worthless—of value mainly as collation. He doesn't understand his author in the least, whose delightfully haphazard style is too much for him. I shall, however, bring home some books you will like to see. I buy mainly with a view to the College Library, whither they will go when I am in Mount Auburn, with so much undone that I might have done. I hope my grandsons will have some of the method I have always lacked.

. . . My little world is getting smaller and smaller, and I am *not* reconciled. Still, I long for the Charles and the meadows, and walk between Elmwood and Shady Hill constantly. I feel much older in body and mind—I can't quite say why or how, but I feel it. I cling to what is left all the more closely. . . .

Always your loving

J. R. L.

TO MRS. E. BURNETT

Arles, April 27, 1878.

. . . Mamma has told you that we were to go off on a leave of absence, and we have now been on our travels eleven days. Thus far we have enjoyed it very much. Our itinerary has been: from Madrid to Tarbes, then Toulouse, then Carcassonne, then Nismes, then Avignon, and then hither. We have thus had a pretty good glimpse of the south of France, and very lovely it is. At Toulouse and Carcassonne I had never been before, and Toulouse, I confess, disappointed me, though there was an interesting old church (St. Sernin) and an old house worth seeing. But Carcassonne is wonderful, a fortified place of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, as perfect as if it had been kept in a museum. As you look across the river at it from the *new* town (six hundred years old) it seems like an illumination out of some old copy of Froissart. I positively thought I was dreaming after looking at it for long enough to forget the modernness about me. Its general aspect is of the dates I have given, but parts are Roman, parts Visigothic, and parts Saracenic. The past is ensconced there as in a virgin fortress, and will hold out forever.

From Nismes we drove out about twelve miles to the Pont du Gard. It rained all the way out; but just as we got there it cleared, and all the thickets (in every one a nightingale) were rainbowed and diamonded by the sun. The *Pont* is a Roman aqueduct, which crosses the deep valley of a pretty river on three rows of arches,

one above another. It is really noble, and these gigantic bones of Rome always touch and impress me more the farther away they are from the mother city. Then we had some bread and sausages and wine in a little arbor, served by a merry old man, who, when I told him I had been there twenty-six years before, challenged me to come back as many hence; "but," said he, touching his white whiskers, and with a sly glance at mine, "*les blancs ne se refont jamais bruns.*" Jacques (our servant) resented this, as in duty bound, and insisted that monsieur wasn't in the least white yet, at which the heartless old boy only laughed, and I joined him in order to put a good face on the matter. I complimented him on his daughter, who was making a pretty nosegay for mamma. "*Ah,*" said he, "*je lui légue les bouteilles vides et les bouchons, mais avec de la santé et la bonne volonté on arrive.*" So we parted, agreeing to meet in 1904! Before we were half way home (if I may call a hotel so) it began to rain again. So you see what luck we had.

From Avignon we drove twenty miles to Vaucluse (which I had not visited before), and found it worthy of all Petrarca had said of it. The *onde* are as *chiare* and *fresche* as ever, and the fountain one of the most marvellous I ever saw. You follow a ravine deeply hollowed in the soft rock for about half a mile, and there, at the foot of a huge precipice, is the basin, which feeds a considerable stream. A clear, calm pool. You see no bubbling of springs from below, no fissure in the rock, and perceive no motion in the water except where it escapes towards the valley. It is lined with factories now,

and French visitors have daubed the rocks with their vulgar names in black paint in every direction. You can't find a fragment to sit on without feeling discomforted by a guilty sense of complicity in hiding half a dozen of these profanations from the angry glare of the sun. We might have lunched at any one of three cafés —one of which invites you with the advertisement painted on its front that here Petrarch wrote his 129th sonnet! It is the Café de Pétrarque et Laure. "Great Cæsar dead and turned to clay," etc. . . .

I don't care to say how soft my heart gets when I think of you all at home. I fancy I am growing old. . . .

TO THE SAME

Athens, May 17, 1878.

. . . Here we are in Athens, and just come in from a visit to the Acropolis, which has served to balance our first impressions, which were rather depressing. For to drive from the Piræus through a dreary country, in a cloud of dust, drawn by two wretched beasts that ought to have been in their graves long ago, and unable to stop the driver from lashing because we could speak no tongue he could understand, and then to enter a shabby little modern town, was by no means inspiriting. I was for turning about and going straight back again, but am getting wonted by degrees, and I dare say shall come to like it after a while. I was stupid enough to be amused last night at hearing the boys crying the newspapers in Greek—as if they could do it in anything else —and fancied I caught some cadences of the tragic cho-

rus in the bray of a donkey, the only "Attic warbler" that I have heard "pour his throat."

. . . Our first sight of Greece was the shores of the Morea, and anything more sterile and dreary I never saw. I thought some parts of our New England coast dreary enough, but this is even grimmer. We had for fellow-passenger a pretty little land-bird, which found the land inviting in spite of all, and flew away when he thought we were near enough. I couldn't help thinking how much better off he would be than we, having a command of the language wherever he lighted. The first natives we saw were two gulls (an imperishable race), probably much less degenerate from their ancestors than the men who now inhabit the country.

The position of the Parthenon, by the way, is incomparable, and, as mamma said, the general sadness of the landscape was in harmony with its ruin. It is the very abomination of desolation, and yet there is nothing that is not noble in its decay. The view seaward is magnificent. I suppose the bird of Pallas haunts the temple still by nights, and hoots sadly for her lost mistress. There was a strange sensation in looking at the blocks which Pericles had probably watched as they were swung into their places, and in walking over the marble floor his sandals had touched. . . .

TO C. E. NORTON

Athens, May 21, 1878.

. . . On the day of my arrival I was profoundly depressed, everything looked so mean—the unpaved and

unsidewalked streets, the Western coat and trousers, and what costumes there were so filthy. And yet I was in luck, for the town is full of Thessalian insurgents, so that I see more that is characteristic than I had a right to expect. They are dreadful ruffians to all appearance, and reminded me of Macaulay's Highlanders. In consequence of them I refused to go out to Marathon with Jebb, who is here, and who, after all, went and came safely. But for my official character I should have gone. I could not afford the time to be sequestered (as we call it in Spain), and the Minister of State thought it risky. The returning patriots are of a class who are quite indifferent whether they learn the time of day from a Moslem or Christian time-piece, and to whom money from whatever pocket is orthodox.

In the afternoon of the day of my arrival I walked up to the Acropolis, and tuned my nerves and mind to a manlier key. It is noble in position and sublime even in ruin. The impression was all I could wish — profound beyond expectation and without artificial stimulus. You know I prefer Gothic to Grecian architecture, and yet (I cannot explain it) the Parthenon was more effective in its place than a shattered cathedral would have been. But imagination plays such tricks with us—

Madrid, Aug. 2, 1878.

I was in the middle of a reflection, my dear Charles, when in came Santiago to tell me that the steamer for Constantinople would leave the Piræus in three hours. It was my only chance, and I decided for going—Athens only half seen. But then, you know, I have a theory

that peaches have only one good bite in 'em, and that a second spoils *that*. I am glad we went. The view of Constantinople as you draw nigh is incomparable, and one sees at once what an imperial eye Constantine had. Planted firmly in Europe, it holds Asia subject with its eye. The climate is admirable—Eastern sun and Western rains. The harbor ample for all the navies of the world—the Bear, if he planted himself here, would get wings and turn aquiline. We went as far as the Black Sea in the track of the *Argo* and saw the Symplegades, very harmless-looking rocks, like certain women when their claws are sheathed. The captain of the French steamer we came back to Marseilles in, who had been in all seas, told me that in winter the Black Sea was the worst of all. Our four days at Constantinople were nothing more nor less than so many Arabian Nights. I couldn't have believed that so much was left. Santa Sofia is very noble, *really* noble, and one sees in it the germ, if not the pattern, of all Oriental architecture—Cordova, Granada, Seville, nay, Venice and St. Mark's. This struck me very much.

The Turks are the most dignified-looking race I have ever seen—a noble bearing even in defeat and even in rags. Their exceeding sobriety of life no doubt helps this—for all their faces look pure—and perhaps their fatalism. Do you remember I prophesied (against Godkin) that they would make a better fight than was expected? I think they did, and that with competent leaders they would have beaten the Muscovite, who, after all, to my thinking, is a giant very weak in the knees.

I saw Layard, by the way, just as he was concluding the Cyprus business, as I found out afterwards. I thought he seemed in tempestuous spirits, and no wonder! I am inclined to like the Asia Minor arrangement (because I wish digging to be done there!), and I think England strong enough for the job. I think if Beaconsfield weren't a Jew, people would think him rather fine. But they can't get over an hereditary itch to pull some of his grinders.

My Eastern peep has been of service in enabling me to see how oriental Spain still is in many ways. Without the comparison, I couldn't be sure of it. . . . I am beginning to feel competent to make some observations on the Spaniards, but shall keep them till they are riper. These things have to stand in solution a long while till the introduction of some new element, we scarce know when or how, precipitates out of mere vagueness into distinct and hard crystals which can be scientifically studied and assigned. I fancy it is otherwise with history, which is not so much "philosophy teaching by example" as clarified experience. It only has to stand on the lees long enough. One apothegm I have already engraved in brass: "The Spaniard offers you his house, but never a meal in it." I like them and find much that is only too congenial in their genius for to-morrow. I am working now at Spanish as I used to work at Old French—that is, all the time and with all my might. I mean to know it better than they do themselves—which isn't saying much. . . .

RS 23
A3 N
v.2:1



